

GRIT
STORY SECTION



FEB. 21, 1932

A Short Story by Kathleen Norris—*S Is for Shiftless Susanna*—in This Issue

The Four Just Men

By Edgar Wallace

LEADING UP TO THIS INSTALMENT

RON GONZALES, Poiccart, George Manfred, and Therry, or Salmont, terming themselves "The Four Just Men," sat about a table on the sidewalk in front of a cafe in Cadiz and calmly discussed the details of their English mission. As the four men then explained to Therry, a new member of their ranks, "The Four Just Men" killed only when an unjust man oppressed his fellow or when a woman was done a wrong against God.

The trustees of foreign affairs in the British legation had placed his life in jeopardy by proposing and urging passage of the "alien and foreign offences bill," which would expel from the shores of the British Isles all foreign subjects.

Sir Philip Ramon ignored the warnings of "The Four Just Men" and went ahead with his plans to have the bill enacted into law. The bill was introduced into the House of Commons and became law when an anonymous note was received in the house of commons, asking pressure be brought to bear on the secretary of state to veto it.

Just to show how easily it could carry out its threat on the secretary's life, the terrorist organization had secured an influential man in the British navy to assassinate the secretary of commons. Neither just nor decent, was added to the bomb, the note pointed out, because "The Four Just Men" did not desire to kill the secretary of state.

Gonzales, Poiccart, Manfred, and Therry had come to London and met there regularly to develop their plot. Even plates, which adorned their table at all times, did not relieve Sir Philip's fear, for he continued in his determination to put through the bill. And near the four men were perching the pains for his assassination.

CHAPTER V

WHEN an advertisement appeared in the "Newspaper Proprietor" announcing that there was—

For Sale. An established photo-engraver's business with a splendid new plant and a stock of chemicals, everybody in the printing world said "That's Etheringtons."

To the uninitiated a photo-engraver's is a place of buzzing saws, and lead shavings, and noisy lathes, and big bright are lamps. To the initiated a photo-engraver's is a place where works of art are reproduced by photolithography on zinc plates, and consequently used for printing purposes.

To the very knowing people of the printing world, Etheringtons' was the worst of its kind, producing the least presentable of pictures at a price slightly above the average. Etheringtons' had been in the market (by order of the trustees) for nearly a year, and owing to its remoteness from Fleet Street and partly to the dilapidated condition of the machinery, there had been no bids.

Manfred, who interviewed the trustee, learned that the business could be either leased or purchased; that immediate possession of the premises was to be had; that there were premises at the top of the house which could be let on a dwelling-place to generations of caretakers, and that a banker's reference was all that was necessary in the way of guarantees.

"Another a crank," said the trustee at a meeting of creditors, "think that he is going to make a fortune turning out photo-gravures of Murillo at a price within reach of the inartistic. He tells me that he is forming a small company to carry on the business, and that so soon as it is formed he will buy the plant."

And sure enough that very day Thomas Brown, merchant; Arthur W. Knight, gentleman; James Selkirk, artist; Andrew Cohen, financial agent; and James Leech, artist, wrote to the registrar of joint stock companies, asking to be formed into a company limited by shares, with the object of carrying on business as photo-engravers.

And five days before the second reading of the Aliens Extradition Act, the company had entered into occupation of their new premises in preparation to starting business.

"Years ago, when I first came to London," said Manfred,



Therry Was on His Feet, White and Snarling, With His Back to the Wall. "Me—Me!" He Breathed; "Kill Me?"

"I learned the easiest way to conceal one's identity was to disguise oneself as a public company."

Gonzales printed a nest notice to the effect that the Fine Art Reproduction Society would begin business, Co. 1, and a further note label that "no hands were wanted," and a further terse announcement that travelers and others could only be seen by appointment, and that all letters must be addressed to the manager.

In a plain little shop, with a deep basement crowded with the dilapidated plant left by the liquidated engraver. The ground floor had been used as offices, and neglected furniture and grimy files predominated.

The first floor had been a workshop, the second had been a store, and the third an office, interesting floor of all with that on which the large cameras and the lenses and lenses that were so necessary an adjunct to the business. In the rear of the house on the floor were the three small rooms that had served the purpose of the bygone caretakers.

In one of these two days after the occupation, sat the four men of "The Four Just Men" looking a small red book, and it may be remarked that he was well-worn and tattered. Poiccart was sketching at a corner of the table, and Manfred was smoking a long thin cigar and studying a manufacturing chemist's book.

"Therry," said some prefer to call him, "the man behind the scenes did not sit there, a smoking cigarette, fire, twiddling his fingers, and staring absently at the leap little flames in the grate. Turning from his study of the fire with a sudden impulse he said:

"How many am I to be kept here?"

Poiccart looked up from his drawing and remarked:

"This is the third time I have asked today."

"Speak Spanish!" cried Therry passionately. "I am tired of this new language. I can not understand it any more than I can understand you."

After this the conversation became Greek to the Spaniard, for the men spoke in English.

"He gives very little trouble," said Gonzales; "now that we have dressed him like an Englishman, he does not attract attention. He is not a good-looking man, but it is necessary, and luckily he is fair. I do not allow him to speak in the street, and this tries his temper somewhat."

Manfred turned the talk into a more serious channel.

"I shall send two more warnings, and one of those must be delivered with very strong hold. He is a brave man."

"What of Garci?" asked Poiccart.

Manfred laughed.

"I saw him Sunday night—a fine old man, fiery and oratorical. I sat at the back of a little hall while he pleaded eloquently for the rights of man. He was with Jacques Rousseau. Most of the audience was mostly composed of Cockney youths, who had come that they might boast what they had stood in the temple of Anarchism."

And all the time Therry smoked cigarettes, looking into the fire with his head on his hands.

"I have come to this matter we have on our hands," said Gonzales. "I suppose that there is nothing more to be done till the day."

"Nothing."

"That's all."

"These are our fine art reproductions."

"And Therry?"

"I will see to him," said Gonzales easily; "we will go overland to Jerez where the girl is." He added laughingly.

The four men had finished their tenth cigarette and were up in his chair with a grunt.

I forgot to tell you," Leon went on, "that today, when we were taking our exercise walk, Therry was considerably interested in the posters he saw everywhere, and was particularly interested in the posters of women. There were many of them. I had to find a lie on the spur of the moment, and I hate lying"—Gonzales was perfectly sincere. "I invented a story about racing or lotteries or something of the sort, and he was satisfied."

Manfred caught his name in spite of its Anglicized pronunciation, and looked inquiry.

"We will leave you to amuse our friend," said Manfred, rising. "Poiccart and I have a few experiments to make."

The two left the room, traversed the narrow passage, and passed through a small doorway. A larger door on the right was locked and barred, led to the study. Drawn on a small key from his pocket, Manfred opened the door, and stepping into the room, switched on a light that shone dimly through a dust-covered table. There had been some attempt at order, but order from the chaos. There had been an attempt of rationalization on the part of the room, though of little avail, each bearing a number. A rough table had been pushed against the wall beneath the shelves, and on the green baize with which the table was covered was a litter of graduate glassware, some containing a dark liquid, and two queer-shaped glass machines, not unlike gas generators.

Poiccart pulled a chair to the table, and gingerly lit a metal cup that stood in a dish of water. Manfred, looking over his shoulder, saw the liquid in the cup. "The formula," he said, "is quite right. Some day we may want to use this."

He replaced the cup in its bath, and reaching beneath the table, took a small box of matches, and with which he carefully surrounded the receptacle.

"I regard that as the highest thing in explosives," he said, and took down a small jar from the shelf, lifted the stopper with the end of his little rod, and poured a few drops of a dark liquid into the metal cup.

"That neutralizes the elements," said Poiccart, acknowledging the remark as though it were a compliment.

"Yes," he said, satisfied. "It is a complete success; the formula is quite right. Some day we may want to use this."

He replaced the cup in its bath, and reaching beneath the table, took a small box of matches, and with which he carefully surrounded the receptacle.

"Me—me!" he breathed, "kill me!"

Neither of the three men said a word, save Manfred, who dropped his outside hand to his side.

"Yes, you." He nodded as he spoke. "It would be new work for us, for we have never slain except for justice—and to kill you would be an unjust thing."

Poiccart looked at Therry pityingly.

"Understand," resumed Manfred calmly, "that not a hair of yours will be harmed if you are faithful—but you will receive a reward that will enable you to live—remember the girl at Jerez."

Therry sat down again with a shrug of indifference, but his hands were trembling as he struck a match to light his cigarette.



"You will wait till it is finished," said Manfred, in the staccato patois of Andalusia; "we have told you that."

"There's growing," he added, "but I have to go to the grave."

"I'm tired of this life," he said suddenly. "I want to walk about without a guard—I want to go back to Jerez, where I was a free man. I am sorry I came away."

"I am I" said Manfred quietly; "not very sorry, though."

"Who are you?" he asked. "What do you wish to kill? Are you anarchists?" What money do you make out of this? I want to know."

Manfred rose and laid his hand on the other's shoulder.

"Senor," he said, "and there was no reason, in his opinion, to suspect your intentions. I keep to myself. I assure you that we do not kill for gain. These two gentlemen whom you see have each fortunes exceeding six million pesetas, and I am even richer; we kill and we kill because we are not afraid. If that—
"He hesitated, still keeping his gray eyes fixed unflinchingly on the Spaniard. Then he resumed gently: "If I kill you it will be the first act of the kind—"

Therry was on his feet, white and snarling, with his back to the wall, a wail at bay, looking from one to the other with fierce suspicion.

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A thin smoke was rising from the cup.

"I never notice those things," Poiccart replied, dipping a thin glass rod into the liquid. He lifted the rod, and watched the thin smoke rising from the end.

"That's all right," he said.

"And it is an explosive no more?" asked Manfred. "It is as harmless as a cup of chocolate."

Polecart wiped the rod on a rag, replaced the phial and turned to his companion.

"And now?" he asked.

Manfred made no answer, but unlocked an old-fashioned safe that stood in the corner of the room. From this he removed a box of polished wood. He opened the box and disclosed the contents.

"If They is the good workman he says he is, here is the bait that shall lure Sir Philip Ramon to his death without fail," he said.

Polecart looked. "Very ingenious," was his only comment; then—"Does Their know, quite know, the sir he has created?"

Manfred closed the lid and replaced the box before he replied.

"Does Their know that he is the fourth Just Man?" he asked; then slowly—"I think not—and it is as well that he does not know," he added, thoughtfully.

A MILLIANT idea came to Smith, the reporter, and he carried it to the chief.

"Not bad," said the editor, which meant that the idea was really very good—not bad at all.

"It would occur to me," said the gratified reporter, "that one or two of the four might be foreigners who don't understand a word of English."

"Quite so," said the chief; "bank it for the suggestion. I'll have it done to-night."

Which diary accounts for the fact that the next morning the "Megaphone" appeared with the police notice printed in French, Italian, German—and Spanish.

STORY SECTION

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Williamsport, Pa., Feb. 21, 1932

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By Edgar Wallace
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An Unsolved Problem
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A Governor's Problem
The Gay Bands of Boston
By Tom Gifford

Continuing This Serial
Faraway Muses—Tragedies of Life

Secretary Hawkins
By Robert Francis Schuklers

Bringing Up Father—Comic
By George McNamee

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By H. J. Tuthill

Wealth
By Janet Tooke

Love Beats Muses Every Time
Poems—Old and New Favorites

CHAPTER VI

THE editor of the "Megaphone" returned from dinner, met the super-chief on the stairs. The super-chief, boyish of face, inquired after the Four Just Men.

"The excitement is keeping up," reported the editor. "People are talking of nothing else but the coming debate on the extradition bill, and the government is taking every precaution against an attack upon Ramon."

The editor stopped his shoulders.

"Nobody really believes that anything will happen, in spite of the bomb."

The super-chief thought for a moment, and then asked, quickly:

"What do you think?"

The editor laughed.

"I think the threat will never be fulfilled; for once the four have struck against a snag. If they hadn't warned Ramon, they might have done something, but forewarned—"

"We shall see," said the super-chief, and went home.

The editor wondered, as he climbed the stairs, how much longer the four would fill the contents bill of his newspaper, and rather hoped that they would make their attempt, even though they might not succeed, failure which he regarded as inevitable.

His room was locked and in darkness, and he fumbled in his pocket for the key, found it, turned the lock, opened the door, and entered.

"I wonder," he mused, reaching out his hand and pressing down the switch of the light.

There was a blinding flash, a quick darkness again.

Startled, he retreated to the corridor and called for a light.

"See here, electrician," he roared; "one of these damned fuses has gone!"

A lamp revealed the room to be filled with pungent smoke; the electrician discovered that every glass tube and every finally fused resistor in a socket and placed on the table. From one of the brackets suspended a curly length of thin wire which ended in a small black box, and it was from this that thick fumes were issuing.

"Open the windows," directed the editor; and a bucket of water having been brought, the little box was dropped carefully into the tub.

Then it was that the editor discovered the letter—the greenish-grey letter that lay upon his desk. He took it up, turned it over, opened it, and noticed that the gun on the envelope was still intact.

"Here, sir, when you turned on your light this evening you probably imagined for an instant that you were a victim of an assassination attempt," he said, with a faint smile of reference. "We owe you an apology for any annoyance we may have caused you."

"I have always believed that these chaps meant business," he said cheerfully, "what is more, I feel pretty certain that they will keep their promise."

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Then he asked, "What have you done about your little scare?"

of a great medium, to throw your weight into the scale in the cause of Justice, to call upon you to do what you can to help us to measure, and save, not only the lives of many an offensive person who have found an asylum in the city, but also the lives of many a member of the crown whose only fault is your eyes in his reclusions in an unrighteous cause.

THE FOUR JUST MEN

"Wheee!" whistled the editor, eyesing the soddened box floating serenely at the top of the bucket.

"Anything, sir?" asked the electrician, drowsily noting the puzzled look of the surprised editor.

"Nothing," was the sharp reply. "Fin-

"I've seen the hall porters and the messengers, and every man on duty at the time, but the coming and the going of our mysterious friend—I don't suppose you know who he is?" the editor explained. "It really is a remarkable thing. Do you know, Welby, it gives me quite an uncanny feeling, the gun on the envelope was still wet; the letter man must have been on the premises and sealed down within a few seconds of my entering the room."

"Were the windows open?"

"No; all three were shut and fastened,

"Ah!" said Welby. "Spanish—what do you wish?" he has in that language.

"Is this the office of that paper?" The man produced a grimy copy of the "Megaphone."

"Yes."

"Can I speak to the editor?"

"I am the editor," he said.

The man looked over his shoulder, then leaned forward.

"I am one of The Four Just Men," he said, hesitating.

With a step towards him and scrutinizing him closely.

"What is your name, Jerez," he replied.

IT WAS half-past ten when, returning from a concert, the cab that bore Polecart and Manfred westward passed through Howes Square and turned off to Odd Fellows Street.

"You ask to see the editor," Manfred was explaining; "they take you up to the office; you explain your business to someone; they are very sorry, but they can not help you; they are polite, but not to the extent of seeing you off the premises, so, wandering about seeking your way out, you come to the editor's room, you knock, knowing that he is out, sit in, make arrangements, walk out, knock, closing the door after you; if nobody is about, addressing a few farewell words to an ordinary occupant, if you happen to be there and voila!"

Polecart burst into a fit of his own.

"Use for your envelope a gum that will not dry under an hour and you heighten the mystery," he said quietly, and Manfred was amazed.

"The envelope just fastened is an irresistible attraction to an English detective."

The cab sped along Oxford Street turned into the High Street, and when Manfred put up his hand and pushed open the trap in the roof.

"We'll get down here," he called, and the other pulled up to the sidewalk.

"I thought you said Pendleton Gardens," he remarked, as Manfred paid him.

"Yes, so I did," said Manfred.

The way was clear on one side of the pavement until the cab disappeared from view, then turned back to the Marble Arch, crossed to Park Lane, walked down that platered thoroughfare, and round to the right. They found a restaurant with a long bar and many small alcoves, where men sat round marble tables, drinking, smoking, and talking. In one of these, alone sat a man, smoking a cigarette and wearing on his clean-shaven mobile face a look of meditative content.

Neither of the men evinced the slightest sign of surprise at meeting the detective, who had made a beeline and into the pallid cheeks of Polecart crept two bright red spots.

They seated themselves, a waiter came and they were given their orders, and when he had gone, Manfred asked in a low tone, "Where is Thery?"

Leon gave the slightest shrug.

"They has made his escape," he answered.

For a minute neither man spoke, and Leon continued:

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"Here," said a Clear Voice
Behind, The Men
Turned to See a
Stranger Facing Them—A Stranger in
Evening Dress, Masked From Brow to Chin

ish your work, refix these globes, and then go."

The detective, ill-satisfied and curious, looked at the floating box and the broken length of wire.

"Curious-looking thing, sir," he said.

"If you ask me—"

"I don't ask you anything; finish your work and go," said the editor impatiently.

"Begin pardon, I'm sure," said the artisan.

Half an hour later the editor of the "Megaphone" sat discussing the situation with Welby. Welby, who is the greatest political editor in the country, was a small, amiable, and drowsy old man.

All that evening nobody but Welby and the chief knew what had happened in the editor's room. There was some running in the sub-editor's department that a small accident had occurred in the sanctum.

"Chief busted a fuse in his room and got a devil of a fright," said the man who attended him.

So that Welby and the chief kept the matter a secret till half an hour before the paper went to press. This may seem

to the layman an extraordinary circumstance, but experience has shown most men who control newspapers that news has an unlucky knack of leaking out before it is time for it to appear.

At half-past eleven the buzzing hive of Megaphone House began to hum, for then it was that the sub-editors left for the first time of the "Orange."

It was at this time that another "Megaphone" scoop, headlined half down the page with "The Just Four" again—Outrage at the office of the "Megaphone"—Devilish Ingenuity—Another

"Were the windows open?"

"No; all three were shut and fastened,

"I am the editor," he said.

The man looked over his shoulder, then leaned forward.

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With a step towards him and scrutinizing him closely.

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The man shook his head, and said a few words in a strange tongue.

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Continued:

"S Is For Shiftless Susanna"

The Story of a Forgetful Woman

By Kathleen Norris

SU look glorious. What's the special program you've laid out for this morning, Sue?" said Susanna's husband, coming upon her in her rose garden early on a certain perfect October morning. "I feel glorious, too," young Mrs. Fairfax said, returning his kiss and dropping basket and scissors to bestow all her attention upon his button-hole rose. "There is no special occasion for all this extravagance," she added, giving a complacent downward glance at the filmy embroideries of her gown, and her small white-shod feet. "In fact, today breaks before me a long and delicious blank. I don't know when I have had such a Saturday. I shall write letters this morning—or perhaps wash my hair—I don't know. And then I'll take Mrs. Elliot for a drive this afternoon, or take some fruit to the Burkes, maybe, and stop for tea at the club. And if you decide to dine in town, I'll have Emma set my dinner out on the porch and commence my new Locke. And if you can beat that program for sheer idle bliss," said Susanna, "let me hear you do it!"

She finished fastening his rose, stepped back to survey it, and raised to his eyes her own joyous, honest blue eyes, which still were as candid as a nice child's. Jim Fairfax, keenly alive to the delight of it, even after six months of marriage, kissed her again.

"You know, Jim," said Susanna, when they were presently sauntering with their load of roses toward the house and breakfast, "apropos of this new dress, I believe I put it on just because there was no reason for it. It is so delightful sometimes to get into pretties, and silk stockings, and a darling new gown, just as a matter of course! All my life, you know, I've had just one good outfit at a time, and sometimes less than that, and all the things I wore every day were so awfully plain—!"

"I know, my darling," Jim said, a little gravely. For he was always sorry to remember that there had been long years of poverty and struggle in Susanna's life before the day when he had found her, an underpaid librarian in a dark old law library, in a dark old street. Susanna, buoyant, ambitious, and overworked, had never stopped in her hard daily round long enough to consider herself pitiful, but she could look back from her rose garden now to the days before she knew Jim, and join him in a little shudder of reminiscence.

"I don't believe a long, idle day will ever seem anything but a joyous holiday to me," she said now. "It seems so curious still, not to be expected anywhere every morning!"

"Well, you may as well get used to it," Jim told her smilingly. But a few minutes later, when Susanna was busy with the coffee-pot, he looked up from a letter to say: "Here's a job for you, after all, today, Sue! This—" and he flattened the crackling sheets beside his plate, "this is from old Thayer."



"Some Day You'll Get an Awful Jolt; You'll Get the Lesson of Your Life, Sue," Jim Said

"Thayer himself?" Susanna echoed, appreciatively. For old Whitman Thayer, in whose hands lay the giving of contracts far larger than any that had as yet been bandied by Jim or his senior partners in the young firm of Reid, Polk, and Fairfax, architects, was naturally an enormously important figure in his and Susanna's world. They spoke of Thayer nearly every night, Jim reporting to his interested wife that Thayer had "come in," or "hadn't come in," that Thayer had "seemed pleased," that Thayer had "jumped" on this, or had "been tickled to death" with that; and the Fairfax domestic barometer varied accordingly.

"Go on, Jim," said Susanna, in suspense.

"Why, it seems that his wife—she's awfully sweet and nice," Jim proceeded, "is coming into town this afternoon, and she wonder'd if it would be too much trouble for Mrs. Fairfax to come in and lunch with her and help her with some shopping."

"Jim, it doesn't say that!" But Susanna's eyes were kindling with joy at the thought. "O, Jim, what a chance! Doesn't that look as if he really liked you!"

"Liked you, you mean," Jim said, giving her the letter. "Now I call that a friendly, decent thing for them to do," young Mr. Fairfax went on musingly.

"If you and she like each other, Sue—
"O, don't worry, we will!" Mrs. Fairfax was always sure of her touch upon a feminine heart.

"Wonder why he didn't think of Mrs. Reid or Mrs. Polk?" said Jim.

"O, Jim, they are sort of—stiff, don't you know?" Susanna returned to her coffee, seasoning Jim's cup carefully before she added, with a look of naive pleasure that Jim thought very charming: "You know I rather thought that Mr. Thayer liked me just that one day I saw him!"

"Well, you'll like her," Jim prophesied. "She's very sweet and gentle, not very strong. They live right up the line there somewhere. She rarely comes in to town. Old Thayer is devoted to her, and he always seems—" Jim hesitated. "I don't know," he went on. "I may be all wrong about this, Sue, but Thayer always seems to be protecting her, don't you know? I don't imagine he'd want to run her up against society women like Jane Reid and Mrs. Polk. You're younger and less effected; you're approachable. I don't know, but it seems to me that way. Anyway," he finished with supreme satisfaction, "I wouldn't take anything in the world for this chance! It shows the old man is really in earnest."

"He says she'll be at the office at 11,"

said Susanna. "That means I must get to the 10:22."

"Sure. And take a taxi when you get to town. Got money? Got the right clothes?"

"Hydrangeas bat," Susanna decided aloud. "New pongee, and pongee coat hung in a careless elegance over my arm. As the last clime of 11 rings I will step into your office—"

"I hope to goodness you will!" said Jim, with an anxious look. "You'll really get there, won't you, Sue? No slips?"

This might have seemed over-emphatic to an unprejudiced outsider. But no one who really knew Susanna would have blamed her young husband for an utter disbelief in the likelihood of her getting anywhere at any given time. Susanna's one glaring fault was a cheerful indifference to the fixed plans of others. Engagements she forgot, ignored, or cancelled at the last minute; dinner guests, arriving at her lovely home, never dreamed how often the consternation of utter surprise was hidden under the hilarious greeting of hostess and host. Dressmakers and dentists charged Susanna mercilessly for forgotten appointments; but an adoring circle of friends had formed a sort of silent conspiracy to save her from herself, and socially she suffered much less than she deserved.

"But some day you'll get an awful jolt; you'll get the lesson of your life, Sue," Jim used to say, and Susanna always answered meekly:

"O, Jim, I know it!"

"My mother used to have a nursery rhyme about me," she told Jim on one occasion. "It was one of those 'A is for Amiable Annie' things, you know; 'K is for Kind Little Katie, whose weight is one hundred and eighty'—you've heard them, of course? Well, 'S was for Shiftless Susanna.' I know the next line was, 'But such was the charm of her manner'—but I've forgotten the rest. Whether mother made that up for my especial benefit or read it, I don't know."

"Well, you have the charm, all right," Jim was obliged to confess, for Susanna had an undeniable genius for adjustment and placation. Nobody was angry long at Susanna, perhaps because so many other people were always ready to step in gladly and fill any gaps in her program. She was too popular to be snubbed. And her excuses were always so sensible!

"You know I simply lose my mind at the telephone," she would plead. "I accept anything then—it never occurs to me that we may have engagements!" Or, "well, the Jacksons said Thursday," she would brilliantly elucidate, "and Mrs. Oliver the twentieth, and it never occurred to me that it was the same day!"

And she was always willing—this was the maddening part of Susanna!—to own herself entirely in the wrong, and always ended any conversation on the subject with a cheerful: "But anyway, I'm improving, you admit that, don't you, Jim? I'm not nearly as bad as I used to be!"

She said now very seriously: "Jim, darling, you may depend upon me. I realize what this means, and I am perfectly delighted to have the chance. At 11 today, 'one if by land, and two if by sea.' I'll be at your office. Trust me!"

"I do, dearest," Jim said. And he went down the drive a little later, under the

blazing glory of the maples with great content in his heart. Susanna, going about her pretty house briskly, felt so sure of herself that the day's good work seemed half accomplished already.

She had adjusted the skirt of the pongee suit, and pinned the hydrangeas hat at a fascinating angle when the telephone rang.

Susanna slipped her bare arms into the stiff sleeves of a Mandarin coat and crossed the hall to the instrument.

"Hello, Susanna!" said the cheerful voice of young Mrs. Harrington, a neighbor and friend, at the other end of the telephone. "I just rang up to know if I could help you out with anything and—"

"Help me out with anything?" Mrs. Fairfax's voice ranged through delicate shades of surprise to

early, get through my business in town, and get the 1:50 train for home—"

"Well, that'll be all right. I'll explain," said the amiable Mrs. Harrington.

A few minutes later Mrs. Fairfax left the kitchen to explain to Emma and Veronica, the maids, that there would be a luncheon for eight ladies served by a caterer, in her home, that day, and that they must simply assist him. She herself must be in town unfortunately, but Mrs. Harrington had very kindly offered to come over and be hostess and play the eighth hand of bridge afterward. Emma and Veronica, perhaps more hardened to these emergencies than are ordinary maids, rose to the occasion, and Susanna hurried off to her train satisfied that as far as the actual luncheon was concerned all would go well. But what the seven women would think when she was another story!

"I don't suppose Mrs. Thayer wants to do so very much shopping," said Susanna to herself, hurrying along. "If I meet her at 11 and we lunch at 1, say, I don't see why I shouldn't get the 1:50 train home. I'd get here before the girls had fairly started playing bridge, and explain things so much better in person—"

"Or suppose we had lunch at 12:30," her uneasy thoughts ran on. "That gives us an hour and a half to shop—that ought to be plenty. But we mustn't lose a minute getting started! Mrs. Thayer will come up in her motor—that will save us time. We can start right off the instant I get to Jim's office."

She stopped at the caterer's for a brief but unsatisfactory interview. The caterer was an artist, but his enthusiasm this morning was wasted upon Susanna.

"Yes, yes—cucumber sandwiches, by all means," she assented hastily, "and the ices—just as you like! Plain, I think—or did you say in cases? I don't care. Only don't fail me, Mr. Ludovici."

Faithful? Mr. Ludovici's lexicon did not know the word. Susanna breathed more freely as she crossed the sunny village street to the train.

The station platform was deserted and bare. Susanna, accustomed to a breathless late arrival, could saunter with delightful leisure to the ticket-seller's window.

"You've not forgotten the new timetable?" said the agent, pleasantly, when they had exchanged greetings.

"O, does the change begin today?" Susanna looked blank.

"Oct. 16, winter schedule," he reminded her buoyantly. "Going to be lots of engagements missed today!"

"But mine is very important and I can not miss it," said Susanna, displeased at his levity. "I must be in Mr. Fairfax's office at 11."

"You won't be more than 10 or 12 min-

"O, Don't Think of That—I Love to Do It!" Susanna Said Putting Her Hand

dawning consternation. "Help me out with what?"

"Why, you told me yourself that this was the day of the bridge-club lunch at your house!" Mrs. Harrington said, almost indignantly. But immediately she became mirthful. "O, Susanna, Susanna! Surely you haven't forgotten so soon—O, have you! O, you poor girl, what on earth will you do? Listen, dear, I could bring a—"

"O, my goodness, Ethel—and I've got to go to town!" Susanna's tone was hushed with a sort of horror. "And not one thing in the house—"

"O, you could get Ludovici as far as the lunch goes, Sue. But the girls will think it's odd, perhaps. Couldn't you wait and take the 1 o'clock."

"Yes, I'll get Ludovici," Susanna decided. "No, I couldn't do that. But I'll tell you what I could do. If you'll be an angel, Ethel, and do the honors until I get here, I could lunch



utes late," said young Mr. Green, consolingly. "You tell Mr. Fairfax it's up to the N. Y. and E. W."

Susanna smiled perfumtorily, but took her place in the train with a sinking heart. She would be late, of course. Late today, when every minute counted and the program allowed for not an instant's delay! She began her rehearsal of her part, found herself eloquently explaining to a pacified Jim capturing a gracious Mrs. Thayer, successfully reaching home again and explaining to an entirely amiable bridge club:

It could be done, of course, but it meant a pretty full day! Susanna's mind reverted uneasily to the consideration that she had already bungled matters. O, well, if she was late, she was late, that was all; and if Jim was furious, why, Jim would simply have to be furious! And she began her explanations again—

After all, it was but 15 minutes past 11 when she walked into the office. But neither Jim nor Thayer was there.

"Mr. Fairfax went out not three minutes ago," said the pretty stenographer in the outer office. Susanna, brought to a full stop, stared at her blankly.

"Went out!"

"Yes, with Mrs. Thayer to the dentist. He said to say he was afraid you had missed your train. There's a note."

The note was forthwith produced. Susanna read it frowningly. It was rather conspicuously headed "Eleven-twelve!"

"Dearest Girl—Can't wait any longer. Mrs. T. must see her dentist (Archibald). I'm taking her up. Thayers and we lunch at the Palace at 1:30. Wait for me in my office. J. F."

"O, what is the matter with everything today?" Susanna burst out in exasperation. "He's wild, of course. When does he ever sign himself 'J. F.' to me! When did they go?" she asked Miss Perry, briefly, with an unreasonable wish that she might somehow hold that irreproachable young woman responsible.

"Just about three minutes ago," said Miss Perry. "He said that if you had missed your train, you wouldn't be here for more than an hour and it was no use waiting."

"You see, it was a changed time-table, and he forgot it just as I did," explained Susanna, pleased to find him fallible, even to that extent.

"But he was on time," fenced Miss Perry, innocently. "They don't change the business trains!" Susanna said coldly. And she decided that she disliked this girl. She opened a magazine and sat down by the open window.

The minutes ticked slowly by. The telephone rang, doors opened and shut, and men came and went through the office. Susanna, opposed in every fiber of her being to passive waiting, suddenly rose.

"Dr. Archibald is in the First National Bank Building, isn't he?" she inquired. "I think I'll join Mrs. Thayer up there. There's no use in my waiting here."

Miss Perry silently verified Dr. Archibald's address in the telephone book, and to the First National Bank Building Susanna immediately made her way. It was growing warmer now and the streets seemed noisy and crowded, no matter—"If I can only get to them and see Jim!" thought Susanna.

In the pleasant shadiness of Dr. Archibald's office, Susanna presently asked if Mrs. Thayer could be told that Mrs. Fairfax was there.

"I think Mrs. Thayer is gone," said the attendant pleasantly. "I'm not sure, but I'll see."

In a few minutes she returned to inform Mrs. Fairfax that Mrs. Thayer had just come in to have a bridge replaced, and was gone.

"You don't know where?" Susanna's voice was a trifle husky with repressed emotion. She realized that she was getting a headache.

No, the attendant didn't know where.

So there was nothing for it but to go back to Jim's office, and back Susanna accordingly went. She walked as fast as she could, conscious of every separate hot step, and was nervous and headache when she entered Miss Perry's presence again.

Mr. Fairfax and Mrs. Thayer had not come in; no, but Miss Perry reported that Mr. Fairfax had telephoned not ten minutes ago, and seemed very anxious to get hold of his wife.

"O, dear, dear!" lamented Susanna, "And where is he now?"

Miss Perry couldn't say. "I wrote his message down," she added, with sympathy.

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Main Paper, This Week

thetic amusement at Susanna's crushed dismay. And, referring to her notes, she repeated it:

"Mr. Fairfax said that Mrs. Thayer had had an appointment to see a sick friend in a hospital this afternoon. But she has gone right out there now instead, so that you and she can go shopping after lunch. You are, please, to meet Mr. Fairfax and the Thayers at the Palace for luncheon at 1:30; there'll be a table reserved. Mr. Fairfax has a little business to attend to just now, but if you don't mind waiting in the office, he thinks it's the coolest place you could be. He wanted to know if you had the whole afternoon free—"

"O, absolutely!" Susanna assented eagerly. This was not the time to speak or think of the bridge club.

"And that was all," finished Miss Perry, except he said perhaps you would like to look at the plans of the orphanage. Mr. Fairfax got them out to show to Mr. Thayer, this afternoon. I can get them for you."

"O, thank you! I do want to see them!" said Susanna, gratefully. And established herself comfortably by the open

window, the orphanage plans, a stiff roll of blue paper, in her lap, her idle eyes following the noonday traffic in the street below.

What a shame to have to sit here doing nothing, today of all days, for nearly two hours! Susanna thought. Why, she could have met her luncheon guests, seen that the meal was at least under way, apologized in person, and then started for town. As it was, they might be angry, and no wonder! And these were her neighbors and very good friends, after all, the women upon whose good feeling half the joy of her country home and garden depended. It was too bad!

She glanced at the blueprints, but one of her sudden inspirations turned the page blank. What time was it? Ten minutes of 12. She referred to her new time table. Ten minutes of—why, she could just catch the noon train, rush home, meet her guests, explain, and come back easily on the 1 o'clock. But would it be wise? Why not?

Her thoughts in a jumble, Susanna hastily gathered her small possessions together, moved to a decision by the always imperative argument that in a few minutes it would be too late to decide.

"Heavens! I'm glad I thought of that!" she ejaculated, seating herself in the train as the noon whistles shrilled all over the city. A moment later she was a trifle disconcerted to find the orphanage plans still in her hand.

"Well, this is surely one of my crazy days!" Susanna strapped the stiff sheets firmly to her handbag. "I must not forget to take those back," she told herself. "Jim will ask for them the very first thing."

Her house, when she reached it, seemed quiet, seemed empty. Susanna crossed the porch, wondering, and encountered the maid.

"Emma! Nobody come?"

"Sure you had the wrong day of it," said Emma, beaming. "Mrs. Harrington phoned about an hour ago, and she says 'tis next Saturday thin!"

"What do you mean?" said Susanna, sharply.

"'Tis not today they're comin', Mrs. Fairfax—"

"Nonsense!" Susanna said under her breath. She flew to her desk and snatched at the scribbled card of engagements. "Why, it's no such thing!" she said indignantly. "Of course it's today! Oct. 16, as plain as print!" And with her eyes still on the card she reached for her desk telephone.

"Ethel," said Susanna, a moment later. "Listen, Ethel, this is Susanna . . . Ethel, what made you say the club luncheon wasn't today? This is my day to have the girls . . . Certainly . . . Why I don't care what she said, I have it written down! . . . Why, I think that's very funny. . . . I have it written . . . No, you can laugh all you want to, but I know I'm right . . . No, that's nothing. Jim will eat it all up tomorrow; he says he never gets enough to eat on Sundays . . . But I can't understand, and I don't believe yet that I . . . Yes, it's written right here: I've got my eyes on it now! It's the most extraordinary . . ."

A little vexed at Mrs. Harrington's unbounded amusement. Susanna terminated

Continued on Page 22

On Unsolved Problem

THE GOVERNOR'S MIND IS SET AT REST.

BY BELLE MANIATES

HE governor was indulging in the unwonted luxury of solitude in his private sanctum of the executive office. The long line of politicians, office seekers, committees, and reporters had passed, and he was supposed to have departed also, but after his exit he had made a detour and again sought his office with peremptory commands to his secretary to admit no one.

Then he sat down to face the knottiest problem that had as yet confronted him in connection with his official duties. An important act of the legislature awaited his signature or veto; various pressing matters urgently called for immediate action, but they were as mere trifles compared to the issue pending upon an article he had read in a bi-weekly country newspaper to the effect that a petition was being circulated to present to Governor Dunn, praying the pardon of Jesse Hume.

Then had begun the great conflict in the mind of David Dunn, "the governor who could do no wrong." It was not a conflict of right and wrong that was being waged. Jesse Hume had been one "to the prison born." A series of crimes, punishment for which had been evaded or shifted on to accomplices, had culminated in one daring act in which he had been caught red-handed, and he had been given the full penalty—ten years—a sentence in which a long-suffering community rejoiced.

Jesse Hume had no friends, but he had made himself useful to a certain gang of ward heelers and petty politicians who were the instigators of this petition, which they knew better than to present themselves. It was to be conveyed to the governor, so the article intimated, by the aged father, Elias Hume, sole relative of the prisoner.

Here was where the petty, petitioning politicians showed their cunning and their knowledge of David Dunn, whose boyhood and early manhood had been lived near Hesstow, the home of the Humes. His sense of gratitude was as strong as his sense of accurate justice, and to Elias Hume, David Dunn owed his first start in life. When he was a young country lawyer, Elias had been the controlling power in the politics of his district, and it was he who had accomplished the nomination of David Dunn for state representative. From

thence the young lawyer had forged straight ahead with no backward steps—state senator, secretary of state, United States congressman, until now as a ruler of a great state he had won the implicit confidence and respect of the people.

There were other ties—other reasons, though these signers knew it not, why David Dunn should heed the prayer for the release of the criminal. Back in the old days of country schools and wood lane, there had been a little sweetheart, Alice Hume. When David made his maiden speech, with its bombastic flights in boy-orator style, it was

On the other hand, would it not be base ingratitude to the man who had placed him on the first round of the ladder to refuse the only favor he had asked—to deny him this one solace in his barren old age? In his moving memory, the almost forgotten voice of his child-sweetheart seemed to plead with him.

It was a wage of head and heart, and both were strong.

There had been no moral compromise in Dunn's code. There was a right and a wrong—plain roads with no middle path, but now, in his extremity, he sought some way of evading the direct issue. If the fellow could be let out on some technicality—an irregularity in the trial! The idea was instantly rejected. He had

been interested, of course, in the case at the time, and had gone over the evidence with Jesse's attorney, who allowed that his client had had a "square deal." If the appeal would only be brought in the regular way to the pardon board first. They would not consider it for a moment, for there was not the shred of a reason for a pardon, but it would not be that way. Old Elias Hume would come direct to him and ask for his son's release. He would ask it quietly and would take it for granted that the youth he had befriended and to whom he had once promised to give his daughter, would be eager to grant the request.

And if he did! Every one would be against it, for public sentiment had been loud in voicing its bitterness towards the crime and the criminal, but it was not public sentiment from which David Dunn shrank—it was from the knowledge that he would betray a trust that he had solemnly sworn to hold sacred.

If he said nay to this old man, who had such faith in him, he would never know a happy moment, and the violet eyes of a fair-haired girl, wistful and reproachful, would ever haunt his vision.

With throbbing "brain and rasped nerves, he made his evening call upon Elaine, the girl to whom he was engaged, and who was ever a clearing house for his tired and tried thoughts. She looked at him tonight with her eyes full of the adoration a young girl gives to a man much older than herself.

There was that in Elaine far beyond grace and beauty—the power of charm.

She brought him the two evening pa-



Together They Went Through the Places of Interest in the Building

to Alice he turned in his triumph. That night they made their shadowy plans for the future.

Again David seemed to "feel the pressure of her slender little hand," and there came a vivid recollection of the blankness of his life when she died. Her youthful guilelessness and inherent goodness had recognized no evil in her wayward brother.

He, David Dunn, had taken an oath to do his duty. His duty was plain. He owed it to the people, in the name of justice, to show no mercy to Jesse Hume.

Continued on Page 20

The Gay Bandit of the Border

By Tom Gill

IT BEGAN THIS WAY

TED RADCLIFFE, former intercollegiate heavyweight wrestling champion and erstwhile Yale football star, arrived in the southwest to visit Don Bob Harkness, close friend of his late father. He found bitter strife waging between the forces of Paco Morales, a cattle baron of the Mexican border, and El Coyote, a bandit who preyed on such as Morales and protected those the Spaniard sought to oppress.

Adela Mendoza, niece of the rascally Paco, found great favor in the eyes of young Ted. The beautiful girl returned this regard, much to the chagrin of Jito, the gigantic Mexican who ruled Morales' vaqueros with a heavy hand. Only the restraint Morales kept on Jito and Adela's infatuations with Ted prevented the two from settling the question of physical mastery.

As Maj. Blount, United States cavalry officer, sought in vain for El Coyote, Don Bob and Ted visited Mendoza's resort of vice. Radcliffe watched the dancers while his companion sought out Ann Reed, the

CHAPTER XXV

HAT same bright morning Mendoza, patron of the glittering palace of dance, was standing very submissively before a limousine drawn up outside his patio. Mendoza's black eyes glistened with excitement. Not for months, he was exclaiming in voluble Spanish, had he been so honored as now. Never before dared he even hope that Senor Paco Morales might pay a visit to his unworthy place. But he was desolate that senor had come in the morning, for now all was silent; yet if he would do him a favor—would not take a glass of Spanish wine to refresh him?

Morales listened noncommittally to the fellow's talk, while his eyes passed leisurely over the low, adobe building that, like some gigantic candle of the desert, brought human moths of both countries to its nightly allure. At last Morales raised his hand and Mendoza froze to respectful silence.

"You have here, I am told, many beautiful women, no?"

The little inkeeper's eyes took on a cunning, knowing look. Now they were getting somewhere. Now, he assured himself, the old fox talked business. He raised his hands in a wide gesture. "Senor, there are women here who would make the great saints weary of paradise. I have here the beauty of many nations. For the dance there is a girl from the boulevards of Paris, a girl, you conceive, who has just come to my palacio. Her little foot—"

"Let us not spend this delightful morning talking of a woman's foot. Especially the foot of a woman who does not interest me."

Again Mendoza sank into a despairing silence. These lords of the land, they were so difficult, que va, yet one must somehow please them.

Meanwhile the low, incisive voice went on.

"I am interested in a woman here who sings. They call her Ann."

"Si, si. The American. Her real name—"

"Why should we seek real names? The name I speak serves. I want to see this woman—now."

sweet-voiced singer who was queen of the place. When she greeted Don Bob in the privacy of her own quarters she hailed him as El Coyote. From her she learned of the latest plans of Blount and Morales to capture the border bandit.

Not long after this word came to the Harkness ranch that Maj. Blount had found a Mexican who promised to reveal the identity of El Coyote. Gathered in the army camp the night the revelation was to come were the army officers, Don Bob, Ted, Morales, Jito, and others. The major told them Antonio Ortega would arrive in camp in a few minutes to give the bandit's name.

Don Bob sauntered outside while the others awaited Ortega's arrival. Suddenly two pistol shots sounded and soldiers brought in the dying Antonio. As they were driving home Ted learned Don Bob was wounded and it came to him in an instant that his friend and benefactor was El Coyote.

Keeping knowledge of his wounds to themselves, Radcliffe and Ann Reed nursed Harkness back to strength. Read on as the excitement grows more intense.

"Men, yes—and some women."

"I wonder why?" Again their eyes flashed.

"It may be they have sufficient reason. But never a beautiful woman—as you are," he added. "May I smoke?"

She held the match for him, then asked, "I am wondering if you came here so early just to tell me that?"

"By no means. It has been long since I first sent you word asking if I might come, and it has been some weeks since you wrote me that I might. Many things have prevented. But chiefly I wished to learn about you before I trusted you too far. Today I came early that I may find you alone, and my reason for coming at all is to ask you certain questions. I expect to pay for the answers. I always pay. Both loyalty and disloyalty I pay, but in different coin. Senorita, you are intelligent, so we can put aside formalities. I am a very powerful, a very rich man. You are a singer at Mendoza's. You do not always desire to remain among alkali and cactus. It may be you dream already of Paris, New York, or Vienna, but to make that dream come true one needs power and money, no?" He paused, and his cold eyes passed over her. "I could perhaps supply both."

"The senor is a lover of art?" Her words had just the faintest sub-tinkle of mockery.

"You mean that in jest, senorita, and yet in a way of speaking, I am. But it is not art, or, if you will permit, it is not even my great admiration for you, that prompts this offer. You see, I can be practical, like you Americans."

Again the girl smiled. "Neither my voice nor my body. What else have I to offer?"

"Information and aid."

"What do you want to know?" She reached for a cigarette.

"Who is El Coyote?"

Her heart jumped, but the hand that held the cigaret never wavered. In contemplation she carefully blew out the match and laid it down. She nodded. "Yes, you would be willing to pay for that knowledge, wouldn't you?"

"Seguro. And rather handsomely."

"Is it true, then, as I have heard, that El Coyote might even destroy this power and wealth of yours?"

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"It is conceivable. Why should I deny it? Meanwhile, he hampers me. He has annoys me. He has killed some of my young men."

"And you think I know who he is?"

"I know nothing. I merely ask. At best I trust you may find out. You see, señorita, men come here who know many things. And these things men will tell when wine runs through their blood, and a pretty woman smiles in a certain manner and at a certain time. We know that members of the killer's band come here. Perhaps he comes. Bueno. You are quite beautiful, you know the game of life, and if I myself, who have lived many years, am not insensitive to your charm, ought it be difficult to get these desert rats to talk—if you choose?"

She seemed to consider. At last, "It might be done. Meanwhile, tell me what you know and what you suspect. Tell me everything that may help me."



"What Do
You Want
to Know?"
She Reached for a Cigarette.
"Who Is El Coyote?"

First, is he a Mexican, this Coyote?"

"I doubt it. I have fair reason to doubt it."

"Do you suspect who he is?"

"If I do, señorita, those suspicions could not help you greatly."

"Where is he most likely to be found?"

The Spaniard shrugged. "He may live out in the foothills and never come into Verdi. He may live in Verdi itself. He may"—and here a shadowy smile crept over the man's face—"he may, let us say, be a rancher living somewhere near Verdi."

It was as if a cold hand clutched her heart. "And if he is an American, what will you do?"

"I shall have him shot. His nationality—what difference? Certainly I shall never trust him to your slow, unpredictable Yankee justice, where anything might happen." Paco Morales rose and walked the length of the room. "There is one thing more," he added, "and in this, too, I shall have need of you. With your beauty it should be an easy thing."

"There is a man staying with the

rancher they call Don Bob. Hardly more than a boy he is, but very strong and very big, and, I regret to say, very attractive to your undiscriminating sex. His name is Senor Radcliffe. My niece, who knows little of men, is, I think, about to love this American. Only the good God knows the ways of women. As for me, I should rather see her dead."

"Why?"

"Why? Because he is not of my world. He is not my choice. I could not die in peace knowing that all my fathers have built up should fall in his gringo hands."

His hands twitched as he lighted a cigarette. For a time the girl's eyes seemed to ponder what he had said. She frowned. "When one is so powerful as Paco Morales, what need is there to ask a woman to rid him of a lone man?"

Morales nodded. "Sl, too, had thought of that. At any time within a day I could say the word that would cause Senor Radcliffe to disappear. But that would not kill my niece's love, and it is her love of him I hate—not this miserable boy. I want that she will turn again to the old

Spanish ways and to me. I would have her hate him."

"And you want him entangled with me." Her low voice had grown languid.

"Senorita, you are direct and, as I say, intelligent. I leave you to set the stage. When you are ready I might even let my niece see with her own eyes what kind of man she cares for. It is not a new trap—but effective, no? And so much more subtle than killing." Again he smiled. "Have I not said I, too, am an artist?"

"In the meantime"—he reached for his wallet and drew out five \$100 bills—"this may make fast our alliance. And remember, this is nothing."

He rose and his voice tightened with intensity. "Today an opportunity comes to you, señorita. Perhaps it comes but once. You have Paco Morales' word that I shall give you 20 times this, and I shall say the word that will open doors to a career you may never have dreamed about. Here on the border I am well served, but at the present moment I have need of you. Do what I ask and you will never regret. They tell me you know the value of silence. It is a golden knowledge."

He stood over her, watching the slanting sunlight that poured in through the window and touched her ivory shoulder and blue-black hair. Then, as before, his eyes brightened. For a moment they were the eyes of an artist, looking at

some rarely beautiful handiwork. He bent down and his straight lips pressed the skin of her shoulder.

"Yes, you are very lovely." His hand for a fugitive second rested on her hair. "Serve me and I may have still further gifts to offer you, for I should like to see that lovely body richly clad, and I should like to see you triumphant in this difficult world. Perhaps—who knows—you may be my last masterpiece, just as, in their way, my niece and Jito are my masterpieces. But you are wiser, I think, than either of these."

At the door he bowed. "When you want me, send word, and I shall come. And one thing more—intelligent people do not play traitor to Paco Morales. Adios."

For a time, for a long time after his footsteps died down the long hall, she sat in silent contemplation. The morning sun was burnishing the velvet blackness of her hair. Lightly she shrugged the jade kimono back from one white shoulder. She smiled into the half-closed eyes mirrored before her.

"Men are such fools," she told those calm, incurious eyes.

CHAPTER XXVI

VERDI, hearing of Don Bob's strained back, had expressed polite regret, and went on busily with more important things.

Meanwhile, after a fretful week, Don Bob limped out to the porch and spent his time rolling cigarettes and gazing over the desert. Twice at sunset Manuel rode up and the two talked in undertones for an hour. And always after these half-whispered conversations, Don Bob remained silent and preoccupied.

So it was Adela and Aunt Clara found him toward the end of a sunny afternoon.

Adela laid her hand against the rancher's cheek as they prepared to leave after a brief visit. "Get well, soon, old friend, and I'll tell you another story—perhaps a love story. And I'll leave you to find for me the happy ending."

"There'll be a happy ending, somehow. Never doubt it, Adela mia."

But before that night was over, the hope of any happy ending was farther away than ever before.

For it was on that evening Bob had sent Ted over to Mendoza's to bring Ann Reed out to the hacienda.

"Ann has some information," he told Ted. "She won't trust it even to Manuel. I've sent word that you would come for her."

In the little roadster Ted came for her just before sunset. As he circled the driveway at Mendoza's a Mexican stood eagerly watching from among the palms in the patio. He waited in patient immobility among the shadows until Ted and the girl entered the roadster, then he drove rapidly out toward the hacienda of Paco Morales.

Not until she was seated on Bob's porch and the cigarettes lighted did the girl begin. Then, as she sat there smoking Ann told them of the visit of Morales and of his seeking for information of El Coyote. Through it all Bob smiled silently.

"I think the old devil suspects," Bob said at last. "Well, unless he moves quickly, his suspicions won't help him. Manuel and I are laying plans of our own. What else is new, little oracle of the border?"

She turned toward Radcliffe. "There is something I learned that may interest you. You know, they talk much of you over at Mendoza's. They talk of your strength and of the time you threw Jito, and always they talk as if sometime you and he are bound to fight again. One night there was a man, a lawyer, over from Sonora. He sat with two others at our table, and for a time Mendoza was with him. When they spoke your name this man from Sonora remembered something about you. I made him talk—it's never very hard to make you men talk. He told me that some years ago a piece of land had been transferred from father to son, and the records of it were entered with his law firm. He said that the land was in your name."

Bob leaned forward. "What did he call the land?"

"He called it the Esperanza property."

"Esperanza!" Bob's gray eyes sparkled. "Good Lord, that holds two of the best

100,000 acres of the best range land he has been using belongs to you!"

Bob went inside, strapped on his shoulder holster and led them down the steps. In the darkness as they drove up at Mendoza's none noticed the long limousine parked in the shadow of the patio. Before they reached the door Bob stopped.

"Ann better not be seen with me. You two go in ahead. I'll take a table and Ted can get that card from you and join me."

She led Radcliffe down the long, darkened hall, and throwing open the door of her room, turned on the light. "Sit down a moment," she said and, closing the door, stepped behind the tapestry that hung before her small dressing-room. In a moment she had returned with a card, but as the man rose to go she shook her head. "I've got to sing soon, but I want to talk to you now for five minutes while you're here alone. It's about you." She reached for the spangled dress and a pair of stockings, then disappeared behind the tapestry, and Ted heard her kicking off her shoes.

"I wanted to warn you that you're in danger—very real danger," came the

"Quien es?" she called.

For answer the door swung slowly open. With a choked cry Ted started to his feet. There at the doorway stood Morales, his face twisted in an exultant smile, and at his elbow was Adela. For a moment their eyes took in the picture, the man standing by the chair, and behind him, clutching the tapestry, that half-clothed figure of the girl that all the border knew as Ann Reed.

Very deliberately Morales spoke. "A thousand pardons. I had hoped to have my niece meet the charming singer. It would seem she is—pleasantly occupied."

As the door swung closed, Ted leaped forward, but the girl flung her arms about him.

"Not now," she pleaded, while her hands held him back. "You mustn't give her a chance to say something she can't recall. Give her time to think. Wait until you're calm. Then go to her."

In Ted's brain was still the memory of Adela's eyes, and for a mad moment his hands twisted with blind rage. Roughly he unwound the girl's arms, and left the room.

Downstairs he ran through the long patio, then out into the night. Adela was nowhere. He searched inside the gaming hall, passed down the line of tables, then hurried into the patio again.

Mendoza stood looking down the road.

"The senor seeks some one?"

"Paco Morales."

The little innkeeper waved toward the road. "Only this moment he left—Senor Morales and his lovely niece." Mendoza looked up at the big, grim-faced man and added in mild surprise, "She was weeping, the poor little lady—weeping on such an exquisite night of spring!"

CHAPTER XXVII

AS TED swept down the long aisle between the tables Bob looked up. Something in the man's quick tread warned him of impending trouble, for never before had his face been so stern, the eyes so deadly. And his voice, as he told Bob what had happened upstairs, held a pent-up fury even more menacing than his eyes. Bob sat for a long moment in thought. At last he said: "I'm inclined to agree with Price that the old Spaniard is just a little mad. How he must have hurt Adela!"

"I can't forget her eyes—they weren't accusing—they weren't even questioning—they were only terribly sad." Ted raised a clenched hand and the square line of his jaw set. "Morales wants open war—now, by God, he'll have it."

"Softly, old son."

"Softly! I've walked softly long enough. To hell with more side-stepping." Ted burst out. "I'm fed up with smiles and words. Oh, it's all clear enough! He wants me out of this country and out of Adela's heart. And if he has to—he'll kill." Ted looked about him. "I could do a little killing myself tonight."

Bob rose. "I think, old fellow, we'd better be going. Jito and his gang are out in the bar—we don't want trouble."

Once again Ted's jaw set. "Ever since I came here I've been avoiding trouble with Morales and his vaqueros. Tonight it's their turn to step aside."



Very Deliberately Morales Spoke. "A Thousand Pardons. I Had Hoped to Have My Niece Meet the Charming Singer. It Would Seem She Is Pleasantly Occupied"

waterholes in this part of the country." He drummed with his fingers on the porch rail. "It would be too good," he murmured.

Ted's own eyes were bright with excitement. "That was the name," he cried. "That was the name dad used the last night we talked. But how could it get transferred to me?"

"I can only guess," Bob replied. "Your father must have transferred it before the crash came. He must have bought that tract when he was laying plans to irrigate the valley, and Morales never knew. That's the best of it. Morales, of course, thought he went up in smoke with the rest of those concessions. Won't that old octopus squirm when he learns that

voice. "Morales suspects you are in love with his niece. He's afraid she is beginning to love you."

"How do you know?"

For a moment he heard only the soft rustle of silk, then she answered "Morales himself. Two days ago he came here. He offered me money to entangle you, so that she would hate you. I agreed because so long as he hopes this plan may succeed you will come to no harm. After that, I'm afraid to think. We mustn't worry Bob, but we've got to do—"

A light knock sounded on the door. He heard her little start of surprise, and saw her bare arm and shoulder as she pulled the tapestry aside.

After a moment's hesitation Bob shrugged and dropped back into his chair. They sat in silence, their unseeing eyes fixed before them, while about them the music swayed and dancers passed and repassed, looking down curiously on the two grim-faced men.

Then, as Bob turned to break the black silence, a waiter hurried to their table and leaned over Ted's shoulder.

"Senor, Jito gives you his message from the bar. He hopes you will join him in a drink when you are no longer engaged upstairs."

The insolence of that challenge stung Ted to instant action. He jumped to his feet, upsetting the little table. His eyes became narrow, bloodshot slits, but his voice was calm. "Come," he said to Bob. "I am accepting Jito's invitation—and God help one of us tonight."

Just outside the door that led into the long bar of Mendoza's, the two men stopped. All bedlam had broken loose in there, and above the chorus of shouts rose the crash of splintered wood, then the silvery shattering of glasses. The thud of a heavy body followed, and the roar of voices redoubled. Bob loosened the top button of his shirt. Then he opened the door.

In sharp contrast to the darkened patio, the white lights of the mirrored barroom for a moment dazzled their eyes. Lined up before the bar 20 or more somber-faced Mexican vaqueros stood, quirts hanging loose at their belts, rowed spurs biting into the wooden floor. A table toward the lower end of the bar had overturned, and bottles and glasses were scattered about it, but it was toward the upper end that the eyes of the vaqueros led.

The crowd had drawn back to the wall, leaving a space of oak floor empty, and here, in the center, lay one of Mendoza's waiters. Above him, leaning over, was the huge, bent figure of a cowboy, and as he raised his dark face, Ted recognized Jito. An ugly grimace played about the Mexican's mouth. He seemed to be turning over in that slow brain of his what next to do to the prostrate form before him.

"Throw him out, Jito," laughed a little vaquero. "Teach him not to interfere with caballeros."

Again the air was filled with cries and oaths, while his men urged Jito on. The big Mexican stooped, picked up the waiter, carried him to the door and, raising him high above his head, hurled the man into the darkness. A storm of laughter and applause arose, but suddenly, as Jito turned back, all voices ceased, and in that sudden silence one might have heard the beating of his own heart.

For Jito had caught sight of Ted standing in the doorway, and across the giant vaquero's face came a look that brought every man to silent immobility

Continued on Page 24

A SHEET of writing paper, an envelope, and a postage stamp are all you need. In this day mail order business has reached such a state of perfection that you can secure just as good service as if you stood at the counter and looked at the goods. Choose what you need from the advertisements in this issue of GRIT and send in your order now.



LIFE is a tragedy. We are obliged to make sacrifices every day. The word tragedy belongs to the sacrifice of a goat. Tragedies were the songs sung at the goat sacrifice—goat songs. Life is a goat song to all of us, because life always ends fatally. No one ever monkeyed with life and escaped the grand finale.

Every day we pass through events and incidents over which we have no control. We are forced to pass through the narrow channel of daily events, like a sacred goat dashing down a narrow alley with a live hornets' nest dangling from his tragic end. A thousand little natural forces are liable to attack us on all six sides before the sun goes down and ushers in new dangers.

Some men are better able to give battle to the belligerent forces and prolong the tragedy of life—the goat song of existence—even laying up a little bit of cold cash and extra bed clothes for the days when they must give up the battle and retire on a \$12 pension.

But in the end they go down, and the goat song is soon sung by the near relatives, and the daily papers announce that



"Madam, Your Son Was Only a Brakeman—My Son Was a Judge!"

a lifelong Democrat, or Republican, has gone where there is no more opportunity to sway the prerogatives of a voting king for a bottle of three-day-old whisky, or words to that effect.

Look around you, my dear reader, and notice the endless battle going on everywhere amongst the natural forces. Opposition is the grindstone on which nature sharpens and polishes all her unique instruments and tools used in carving out the new features of eternally changing evolution. The crunching wheels of nature's mighty juggernaut car of evolution grind its millions of victims to a dead finish every hour.

Animal, insect, reptile, and man have but a brief spell on the stage of life;

across which rolls daily and hourly the great silencing wave of mortality. But none escape. All in time fall beneath the dark cloud of destruction and are dragged out to sea by the vampires of decay.

In the tragedies of every one's life there are scenes that wring the heart and pull down the somber curtains of sorrow until the soul can do no more than grope its way through the chilly darkness that hangs over the closed door of future hopes.

Tragedies, of life! How easy it is for us to forget that others have the same sad sorrows that come to us. We are so apt to imagine that our struggles and our hardships are so much greater than the hardships that fall into our neighbor's life, that our heartaches are more acute and more painful than the heartaches of others.

Like the two bereaved mothers who met at the scene of a railroad wreck, both waiting until the dead were removed so they could identify their sons. The one was a rich lady, dressed in silk and wearing diamonds on her hands, while the other wore a simple calico dress and a faded shawl thrown over her head. The poor woman approached the former when she learned that she, too, had a son lost in the wreck, and holding out her calloused hand to the weeping one, exclaimed:

"Hevin pity ye, me poor leddy; Oi kin sympathize wid yez in yer sorror, mum, for my poor Jimmy lays crushed under de same car."

But the rich and proud woman did not shake the proffered hand of sympathy. She looked the poor woman coldly in the face and replied:

"But, madam, your son was only a brakeman—my son was a judge!"

"Bedad," spoke up one of the wrecking crew, "if he was no better judge ov human hearts than th' mother, th' wurreld kin shand th' loss ov th' judge a domd soight sizier than it kin afford to lose a good brakeman!"

Tragedies of life! Indeed they are so common that we pass through them often without paying any special attention to them. They come so fast and in such natural ways that we accept them the same as we do a boil, or the belly-ache, or a notice from the tax collector, or a visit from our mother-in-law. And we live through them somehow, experience some measure of recovery, then get ready for another tragic bellyache, as it were.

Ah, yes, it's enough to give me a pain in the neck.

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Secretary Hawkins

By Robert Franc Schukers

Fong Shu, the Magician, Makes Good His Escape

Seck Hawkins is helping his friend, Su Chow Ming, rescue Flower of the Sun, a Chinese girl, who is being held hostage until the Emperor's Sword, a valuable ancient weapon, is turned over to the Fong Shu Society of the Lanterns. The latter capture Sadler, Hawkins' pal, by mistake, thinking they were taking Hawkins. The Emperor's Sword having been sent back to China, Su Chow Ming makes an imitation of it, which Hawkins delivers at the headquarters of the Fong Shu and rescues Flower of the Sun and Sadler. Jeckerson and his men, who had the place surrounded, capture every one except the old Fong Shu.

THE noise and the excitement in the place was maddening, and I had all I could do to keep my wits about me. I was overjoyed to see Jeckerson's trusted Olaf hurrying toward me, and close behind him came Wu Chan, our loyal Chinese guide.

"Come!" said Wu Chan. He held his hand out for the Chinese girl. But she hesitated—drew back—and then ran to me, and took hold of my hand.

"Yat Kwong go with Fat Boy Who Sings of Swans Upon River," she said, softly. "He saved me from Fong Shu. Until I stand in presence of Su Chow Ming, my father's friend, who means safety to me, I wish to stay with Honorable Hawkins."

"Good!" said Wu Chan, smiling at her, and nodding at me the next second. I picked up the imitation of the Emperor's Sword, and together we all started for the door—

"Wait!" I whispered suddenly.

My eyes had caught sight of something . . . something green that glinted like a long line on the rear wall of the wooden paneled room. It was a green light that was shining through the crack between two loose boards in the wall. We all turned . . . the light now shone through several cracks in the wall, . . .

"It's the Fong Shu!" whispered Flower of the Sun.

The next moment the panel between the two nearest gleams of green shot upward, and a cloud of greenish smoke shone behind it. Olaf hurried out of the door with Sadler in his arms. Wu Chan and the Chinese girl fell flat upon their faces with startled cries. I alone stood, with the imitation sword in my hand, facing the green cloud within the paneled opening. . . . I alone was the only one who ever had stood so, face to face with the great enchanter, Fong Shu . . . but still I faced only a greenish cloud, and I could not see the face of the dreaded magician.

And now from the depths of that greenish cloud came a low voice that vibrated with a strange quality.

"You have won the battle today. O foolish youth! The odds lie in your favor. But another day will come, when we meet again. Woe to them that defy the great Fong Shu!"

And before I had a chance to move, there came a face within that cloud—an old face, wrinkled and yellow, and there seemed to be a spider web curtain hanging in the green light between me and the face—and then I saw two withered old hands lift below the face, and in those gnarled fingers was a strange kind of lamp that threw the green light about a cloud of vapor . . . the fingers of the right hand now rubbed the lamp, and lo! the geni smiled as he began to disappear . . . how the echoes of that laugh still come back to me as I write! Now the panel suddenly dropped and the vision was blotted from my sight.

I ran to the wall and beat my fist upon the panel. It was thin. I passed my hand around the edges, for a secret button that would release the spring to raise it, but I found none. But I was all set to do something now! that even Detective Jeckerson and the others had not accomplished—I was going to get this Fong Shu and discover his magic, which I was sure must be all humbug and a fake . . . I lifted the heavy sword in my hands and brought it down upon the panel! Crash! The first blow splintered it through. Once more . . . crash! Now I had a hole in it big enough to get through—

"O Honorable Hawkins!" cried the Chinese girl, rushing to me as I started to step through the splintered panel, "do not leave us now!"

"Have no fear," I said, softly.

"But you must not go in there!" said Wu Chan, as he tugged my sleeve. "It is not safe . . . we promise Su Chow Ming to bring you and Chinese girl back safely . . ."

"Go down to the boat, Wu Chan," I said, with a smile. "Take Flower of the Sun with you. Have Olaf and the boy in the boat all ready to start away as soon as I return. We must not lose a moment."

"But you are risking precious moments," said Wu Chan, excitedly. "Try not to follow the Fong Shu, lest he entrap you in one of his many magic webs—"

"It's my chance to find out something that will be of great help to Jeckerson and the police," I said, shortly. "Go, and I will join you presently."

They obeyed, and I waited until I saw them join Olaf and start for the canal outside, where the boats waited. Then I stepped through the broken panel, and taking out my flashlight, I gazed about. I was in a narrow passage. A long series of steps led upward. I started climbing them as rapidly as I could. They seemed never-ending; but finally I came out upon a small opening that looked like a window. It was a sort of square wooden tower, and it opened upon a roof. There was nothing to be seen on the roof. Only the moon high in the sky and the stars shining like gems in a velvet dome. As I glanced at the myriads of lights below, where Jeckerson's officers were round-

ing up their prisoners, I heard the whir of the air mail as it sailed across the night above me.

The Fong Shu was rather a good magician, I admitted to myself, as I went back down the stairs, my flashlight in one hand, the sword in the other. The boat was waiting.

THROUGH the maze of lights in the canal our boat wended its way. The little water street had been almost clogged by the police boats. Wu Chan steered the craft while Olaf sat in the middle seat with Sadler, who had now come to his senses, but was still in a dazed condition. I sat with Flower of the Sun, and she held tightly to my arm, as though she were still afraid. Occasionally I could feel a trembling in her clutch, and her teeth chattered. I could not say a word to comfort her, because I myself felt rather shaky after this night's strange adventure. At a certain wharf in Watertown an automobile waited. We hurried out of the boat and into the car. We shot along like lightning, until Wu Chan opened the door,

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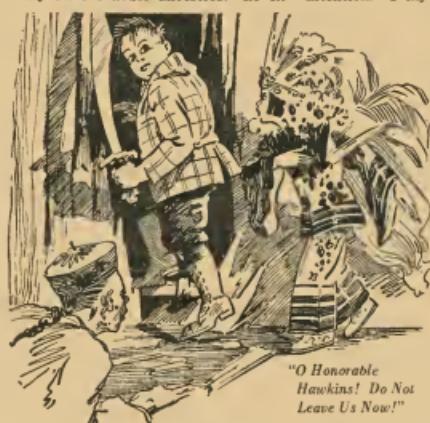
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and we got out while Olaf took the wheel and said he would take Sadler to Doc Waters' office and wait there.

I was too tired to notice how we went, but finally we went through a dark door and down a series of steps; along another passage and then to a corridor where an elevator waited to take us up to the third landing, where we were ushered off by Wu Chan into the sumptuous quarters of Su Chow Ming, the lovable old Chinese who had befriended Jeckerson and me on many occasions. It was he who had asked us to help him rescue Flower of the Sun. And now Wu Chan shoved me forward, as he rang the bell, and when the door opened, I stood there, holding Flower of the Sun by the hand, and old Ho Nan Sing, the servant of Su Chow, stared in amazement.

He quickly took us into the presence of the kindly old Chinese. Old Su Chow was seated behind a great ebony table.

"By all the noble ancestors!" he ex-



"O Honorable Hawkins! Do Not Leave Us Now!"

claimed. "It is Hawkins who has saved the daughter of my honored friend!"

"Yes, with the help of a hundred others!" I said, as I led the Chinese girl up to his desk. "Here she is, O noble Su Chow Ming! And glad I am to have been able to do for you this service."

"Ask any favor," said Su Chow, rising from his chair and extending his hand, "any favor and it will be granted to you, for bringing back to me the lovely Flower of the Sun, daughter of my most esteemed mandarin friend in old Mother China!"

"This is all I want," I said, pointing to the imitation Emperor's Sword that I held; "may I keep it? As a souvenir, you know . . . sometimes in the future I will want to think of you, Su Chow. Then I shall look upon this old imitation Emperor's Sword, that your skillful hands fashioned for me and with which I saved the daughter of your mandarin friend."

BEFORE I could say another word there came a sound of a window being raised—the next instant something flashed past in the air between us and thudded upon the floor. It was a curved

dagger, and its point stuck in the rich carpet, while its hilt swayed to and fro from the impact. At the same time I saw a greenish glow outside the window! Ho Nan Sing came running in—

"On the fire escape!" he cried, wildly, as he stood before Su Chow and pointed toward the open window. "It is foe, my master! Hop Ling say he see same come down fire escape in green light—alleged same Fong Shu!"

"Lend me thy sword, O Hawkins!" cried Su Chow Ming, and I was amazed at the way the old man leaped across his desk, and stood beside me. I handed him the weapon, and he ran to the window. I followed him. Out upon the fire escape he went, with me at his heels. I looked up—far above us was the roof, some 20 stories—and from the roof a greenish light was slowly fading away.

"Quick!" cried Su Chow, as if to spur himself on. "Much speed is needed now, if we expect to catch green eagle of evil intention. O my feet, be young again!"

How we raced up that iron ladder of the fire escape, from one floor to another, until we neared the top—when all of a sudden we heard the whirr of a motor—

It was with a sinking heart that we finally arrived at the roof, to see a queer airplane leaving the flat top of the huge building. But this was no ordinary airplane—it was a much improved type of a gyro—an airplane that lifts itself off straight up with a horizontal propeller, one that can come straight down and land on any spot and take itself off the same way. Now it had reached an altitude in which it was almost fading from sight in the darkness, and we could hear the purr of its motor as it headed for the northern districts away from Water-town. The Fong Shu had escaped again.

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK
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WHERE VERMONT COMES IN

UP WHERE the north wind blows just a little keener,
Up where the grasses grow just a little greener,
Up where the mountain peaks rise a little higher,
Up where the human kind draws a little nigher,
That's where Vermont comes in.

CHORUS:

Wherever manhood fights for honor,
And where woman shrinks at sin,
Where health is man's best riches,
That's where Vermont comes in.

Up where the snows of winter last a little longer,
Up where the heart beats just a little stronger,
Up where the handclasp is just a little warmer,
That's where Vermont comes in.

Up where the bonesome pine fits mighty requiren' sight,
Up where the unpolluted waters take their rise,
Up where the sons of toil have fought for free-
dom's sod.

Up where all Nature's wood is a little nearer God,
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—CHARLES H. DARLING.

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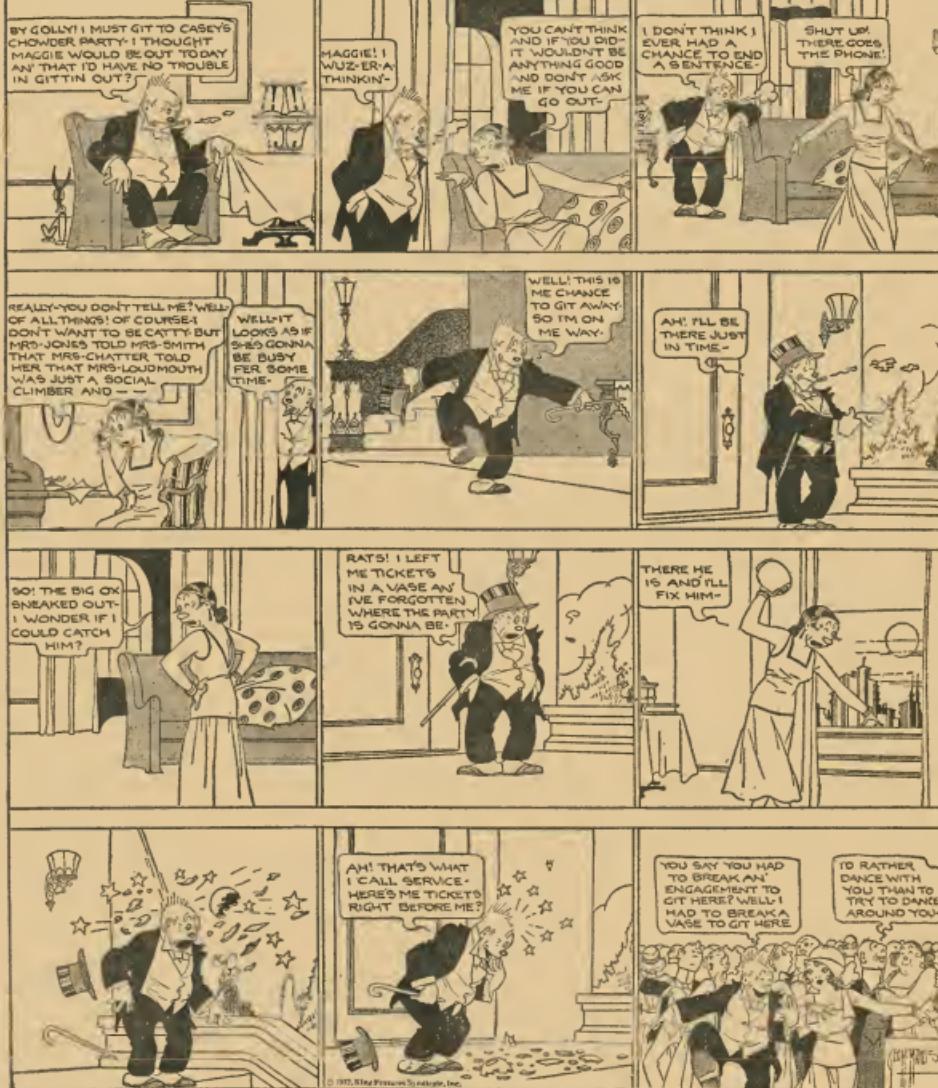
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BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



THE BUNGLE FAMILY

By H. J. Tuthill



WEALTH

BY JANET COOKE

MONEY DOESN'T MATTER WHERE LOVE ENTERS IN

KATHLEEN gazed about her at the pretty garden, a-bloom with flowers. "Fourteen years we have been neighbors, George," she murmured.

"And you don't look 14 days older than when John brought you here."

"I've been too busy to grow old."

Kathleen snipped more flowers to add to the large bunch she already held. "I just hate to leave my flowers, George."

"Better take my advice, and wait awhile before you put the place up for sale. You might change your mind and want to come back."

"No! I couldn't stand it without John. Everything reminds me of him. His hand touched all this, dug the soil, planted the trees. Do you remember when he built that fountain for me?"

"Shouldn't that make the place all the dearer to you?"

Kathleen sighed. "In a way, yes. But—I'm afraid I can't stay, George. It would be too lonely."

"I understand. Kathleen, I've been through it myself."

"And I want to see my folks. It seems as if the years will just roll back like a curtain when I get among them, and I shall be a child again."

"Well, I wish you all happiness, Kathleen. But it's sure going to be lonesome without you—and John."

"You'll try your best to sell the place, won't you, George? Don't put up the sign until I've gone—I Domain!"

after that, the sooner it's sold the better."

George nodded, and returned to his own little home with a heavy heart. He had built it there on the mountainside on account of his wife's health, but in spite of every care she had faded away. John and Kathleen Weldon had been his neighbors and best friends for years. But now John had gone too. And Kathleen had decided to return to her folks in the East. Well, it was all over.

George fell briskly to work on his potatoes, remembering that there is no better antidote for sadness than hard work.

The next morning he called with his rickety car to take Kathleen to the station. He found her pouring milk into saucers lined up in the shade of the porch, while a large yellow cat looked on with interest.

"You'll be good to Ginger, won't you, George?" she said.

WHERE Kathleen had left a small town 14 years before, she now found a busy, prosperous city. On the once quiet street where the old home stood, the din of the rushing traffic vied with the shouts of newsboys, and the odors of restaurants competed with gasoline furnaces for supremacy.

Her sisters were constantly busy with their friends and parties. The friends were new to Kathleen, and the parties seemed silly. She felt utterly out of place and restless.

"You should get something to do, Kathie!" her mother suggested. "A little

tea shop, or"

"You mean, to buy one?"

"Why not? You're a fine cook, and a good manager! There's nothing like having your own business!"

Kathleen brightened. "That would be nice, but—I'll have to wait until my home is sold!"

"You might be



And There George
Found Her—a
Starry-Eyed Queen
of Her Little
Domain!

learning the business in the meantime. 'Tisn't good for you to sit around moping. You want to get out and meet people. Forget the past, and look to the future!"

Kathleen sighed. The future loomed dull and empty; the past delightful.

She soon got a position as waitress in a restaurant, and found the work interesting. Sometimes she stopped suddenly, arrested by a passing perfume. Visions of roses and honeysuckle appeared before her, the whisper of a fountain, blotting out white-topped tables, rouged lips and slicked hair. Then the discordant clatter of dishes would break in, and with a little catch in her heart she would hurry on again.

Men flirted with her, and there were invitations to parties and shows, which she sometimes accepted, but more often declined.

Then one day came Maurice McNair; walking into the restaurant with that nonchalant air that had been part of his charm years ago when Kathleen first knew him. Stouter, more florid, and slightly bald, there was yet something attractive about him. An insouciance that was almost Pan-like. In spite of his big frame, he stepped lightly over the polished floor to a table by the window.

Kathleen hoped he would not recognize her. But he had not been seated five minutes before he rose and bowed before her as if she had been a lady of high degree.

"Kathie dear, you've not changed a mite!" He had the same caressing voice, and she blushed at the expression of real joy that shone from his eyes.

That night he was waiting for her when the restaurant closed, and instead of going straight home, they strolled through the park, talking of old times, and of things that had happened with the passing years.

"You've heard, haven't you, Kathie, that I have become a very rich man?"

"I heard all about it, Maurice," she nodded. "I'm so glad!"

"Yes; but I want some one to share it with me now!"

"Strange you've never married!"

"Never married! My dear girl, I've been married twice!"

"Why, Maurice!" she laughed. "That's one thing I never heard of. I'm sorry if"

"No need to be sorry! Divorce in both cases. Now I've decided there's no love like the old love, after all! Will you be my third?"

Kathleen, utterly astounded, remembered the gay young Maurice who had made love to her 'way back before she met John. Who, when he had gained her whole-hearted devotion, had turned his attention to another. Her lips twisted now with pity for the disconsolate little girl that had been her! Then she chuckled.

"My dear Maurice, have you forgotten that you once broke my heart?"

"I haven't forgotten, Kathie, and I've never ceased to regret it, but . . . you see, I was so poor! Afraid to take the chance! You know how it is!"

"I know!" *Continued on Page 28*

WEALTH

Continued from Page 18

"If you'd marry me now, Kathie, you'd be a rich woman. For our honeymoon, we'd go France, Italy, anywhere! You could travel always, for that matter!"

She smiled slyly. He had not forgotten her longing for travel. It had always been the thing she wanted most of all. The offer was tempting. She still found Maurice charming. And, oh, to be able to see the world!

She promised to give him an answer in three days. And that night she lay awake thinking over this new and pleasant prospect. No more handling of dirty dishes! No more work! No more worry! Strange places, new interests to fill her empty life. But could she put Maurice in John's place?

It was nearly noon when her mother awakened her with a cup of coffee, and news that Ruffel's Arbor was for sale.

"The chance of a lifetime, my dear! Old Ruffel made a fortune there! The location's fine, and the customers the prosperous type you can depend on!"

Kathleen was startled into sudden remembrance of last night's proposal. Owning Ruffel's Arbor seemed dull and irksome compared with owning a rich husband, a great mansion, and cars. Something warned her not to tell her mother about it. Her mother and sisters would think her an absolute fool to hesitate an instant over such an offer!

"But my home isn't sold yet, mother! I haven't the money!"

"I'll advance the money. Go right over and snap up the Arbor while you've got the chance! And if George Fletcher can't sell your place, you'd better put it in the hands of some one who can!"

Still in a state of indecision, she dressed quickly, and was leaving the house with her mother, when the mailman placed a letter in her hand. She opened it with a thrill of anticipation. A letter from home! Strange she still thought of it as home!

Her garden was finer than ever this year, George wrote. The roses had never been so good. The rockeries flamed with color, and the wistaria was gloriously lovely. How he wished Kathleen could see it! George took food and drink for Ginger every day, but she had never condescended to be friendly with him. It was George's opinion that Ginger was awaiting Kathleen's return. She looked "sorta lonesome."

"And now comes the good news, Kathleen," the letter continued. "It's a good news to me only because I know it will please you. I've had a fine offer for your property. The prospective purchasers want to build a hotel on the site, and are willing to pay cash. Of course, I hate the idea; and if the deal goes through, I guess I'll sell my own place. But it's up to you, Kathleen!"

"A hotel! Upon my garden!" Kathleen shuddered. "On my fountain! My hedges! Oh, the place will be ruined! They'll tear down the house John took me to!"

She glanced at the letter again. "Willing to pay cash . . ." Just what she needed—if she didn't accept Maurice. The thought failed to thrill her.

"I'll go and see about it myself!" she decided. "Can't leave all the work to

good old George! Ruffel's Arbor will have to wait!"

THE garden upon the hill was just as George had said—gaspingly lovely! Kathleen had not told him she was coming, and, to prolong the joy of anticipation, had walked up the hillside. The vines stretched welcoming arms toward her. The birds had never sung so sweetly; and the perfume of orange blossoms enwrapped her caressingly. The fountain no longer whispered—it sang!

The song entered the heart of Kathleen, and she felt young and carefree as the air itself. The little gate clicked behind her, and she walked slowly up the flagged path to the cottage that was now veiled with bloom. Like a bride!

From the shrubbery came a flash of gold, and Ginger rolled in ecstasy at her feet. And wonder! wonders, three other flashes of gold! Round, fat, and fluffy!

"Oh, you darlings! Ginger, I do believe you're glad to see me! . . . You dear, fluffy things! Have you ever seen the big noisy city? Well, you're little ignoramuses, and—I love you!"

Cuddling the kittens to her breast, Kathleen sank to a vine-shaded seat. And

there George found her—a starry-eyed queen of her little domain!

"Kathleen? . . . Why, Kathleen! How natural to see you sitting there! How happy you look!"

"I'm so happy I could cry, George!"

"Yes," said George, a trifle sadly, "I guess you are! You'll be making a good sum of money out of the place!"

"I'm going to make something a lot better than a good sum of money, George! I'm going to make a wealth of happiness. I'm home! To stay!"

There was a roguish twinkle in George's eyes. "I've been over here so much since you left," he said, "that it feels like home to me too. My own place always seems kind of lonesome when I get back."

"You miss Ginger, perhaps?"

"No! It's not Ginger I've been missing. You know, Kathleen, to me it seems foolish for two people to go on being lonesome all by themselves, when . . ."

"When what, George?"

"When they could just as well be lonesome together, Kathleen!"

The kittens tumbled unnoticed from Kathleen's lap, and when she looked up, her face was radiant.

"I don't think we'd be a bit lonesome together, George," she said, smiling up at him.

AN UNSOLVED PROBLEM

Continued from Page 9

pers, of opposite politics. In glowing headlines of the one against him he read in exaggerated form, but true in the main, the story of his early life, his humble home, his days of struggle, his start in life and all his successes due to the father of the hardened criminal. Would the governor do his duty and see that law and order were maintained, or would he sacrifice the people to his own personal obligations? Dunn smiled grimly as he thought that whatever course he followed would be censured by this same paper.

He took up the other one, the organ of his party, which stated the facts very much as the other paper had done, and added that Elias Hume was en route to the capital city for the purpose of asking a pardon for his son. The editor, in another column, briefly and firmly expressed his faith in the belief that David Dunn would be staunch in his views of what was right and for the public welfare.

There was one consolation; neither paper had profaned by public mention the love of his boyhood days.

He left Elaine early that night and the next day at the breakfast table, on his way to the capital, and in his office, in the curious faces of all he encountered, he read the question he was continually asking himself.

He went into his private office and summoned his secretary.

"Gilkes, don't let in any more people today than is absolutely necessary. I will see no reporters. You can tell them no petition or request for the pardon of Jesse Hume has reached this office, oh—Gilkes—"

The secretary turned expectantly.

"If Elias Hume comes, of course he is to be admitted at once."

Later in the morning, the messenger to the governor stood at the office window, idly looking out.

"Dollars to doughnuts," he exclaimed suddenly and confidently "that this is Elias Hume coming up the front walk!"

The secretary hastened to the window. A grizzled old man, in buttercup-colored, tightly-buttoned overcoat, and carrying a telescope bag, was ascending the steps.

"I don't know why you think so," said the secretary resentfully to the boy. "Elias Hume isn't the only farmer in the world. Sometimes," he added, pursuing a train of thought beyond the boy's knowledge, "it seems as if no one but farmers came into this capital!"

A few moments later one of the guards ushered into the business office the old man, overcoat and telescope. The secretary now caught the infection of the boy's belief.

"What can I do for you?" he asked courteously.

"I want to see the guvner," replied the old man in a curtailed tone.

"Your name?" asked the secretary.

"Elias Hume," was the response.

David Dunn knew when he heard the knock whom he would open the door to, and he was glad the strain of suspense was ended. But when he looked into the familiar face, a host of old memories crowded in upon his recollection, and for an instant he forgot why the old man came.

"Uncle Elias!" he said, extending a cordial hand to the visitor, while his stern, strong face softened under his slow, sweet smile. Then he turned to his secretary.

"Admit no one else, major."

The governor took the telescope bag from his guest and set it on the table, wondering if it contained the "documents in evidence."

"Take off your coat, Uncle Elias; they keep it pretty warm in here!"

"I cal'late they do—in more ways than one," chuckled the old man, removing his coat. "I hed to start purty early this morning, when it was cool-like. So, Dave, you ain't fergot how you an' all the boys called me 'Uncle Elias.' Wal, times has changed! To think of old Josh Dunn's boy bein' the guvner! Why, I never jest seemed to take it in till I cum up them steps!"

The governor laughed.

"Sometimes I don't seem to take it in myself."

He was unlocking a little cabinet as he spoke, and he now produced a bottle and a couple of glasses.

"Wal, I dew declar!" exclaimed the old man, "ef you don't hev things as handy as a pocket in a shirt! Good stuff, Dave! More warmin' than my old coat, I reckon, but say, why don't you ask me what I hev got in that air telescope?"

David winced. In olden times the old man never came right to the point. He had always steered straight away from his object, and no coaxing could bring him to it until he so willed.

"Why—what is it, Uncle Elias?"

"Open it!" directed the old man.

With the feeling that he was opening his coffin, David unstrapped the telescope and lifted the cover. A little exclamation of pleasure escaped him. The telescope bag held big red apples, and it held nothing more. David quickly bit into one.

"I know from just which particular tree these come," he said, "from that humped, old one in the corner of the orchard near the house."

"Yes," said the old man, "that's jest the one—the one under which you an' her used to set and purtend you were gittin' your lessons."

The governor's eyes were luminous in reminiscence.

"I haven't forgotten—her—or the old days," he said, slowly.

"I know'd you hend't, Dave!"

Again David's heart sank at the confidence in the tone which betokened the faith reposed, but he would give the old man a good time anyway before he took his destiny by the throat.

"Wouldn't you like to go through the capital?" he asked.

"I be goin'. The teller that brung me up here, sed he'd show me through."

"I'll show you through," said Dave decisively, and together they went through the places of interest in the building.

David, as proud as a newly domesticated man, showing off his house. At last they reached the rotunda of the entrance hall where, in a huge glass case, reposed the old, unfurled battle flags. The old man stopped before the case and looked long and reverently within.

"What was your regiment, Uncle Elias?"

"Forty-seventh Infantry."

David called to a guard and obtained a key to the case. Opening it, he bade the old man take out the flag of his regiment. With trembling hands Elias took out the flag he had followed when all his country went to war. He gazed at it in silence and returned it carefully.

"It's luncheon time, Uncle Elias. We'll go over to my hotel. The executive man-servant is undergoing repairs."

"I want more'n a lunch, Dave! I haint et nuthin' sence four o'clock this mornin'."

"Oh, I'll see that you get enough to eat," laughed David.

In the hotel lobby a reporter came quickly up to them.

"How are you, governor?" he asked, with his eyes fastened on Elias.

David returned the salutation and presented his companion.

"Mr. Hume from Heststown?" asked the man with an insinuating emphasis on the name of the town.

"Yes," replied the old man in surprise. "I don't seem to reckleck seein' you before."

"I never met you, but I've heard of you. May I ask what your business in the city is, Mr. Hume?"

The old man gave him a keen glance from beneath his shaggy brows.

"I cum to see the guvner," he said shortly.

And then David, with a laugh of delight at the discomfiture of the reporter, led the way to the dining room.

"You're as foxy as ever, Uncle Elias! You checkmated that newspaper man in good shape."

"Was that a newspaper man? Wal, I suppose it's his trade to ask questions."

The old man's loquacity always ceased at meal times, so his silence through the luncheon was not surprising to David.

"Wal, David, of this yer lunch, I'd hate to see what you call dinner. I never so much at one settin' afore!"

"We'll go over to the club now and have a smoke," laughed David, "and then you must go back to my office with me, and see what I have to undergo every afternoon for two hours."

At the club they met several of David's friends—not politicians—who met Elias with courtesy and composure. When they returned to the capitol, Elias was ensconced comfortably in an armchair in the private office, while David listened with patience and replied with intelligence to the long line of importuners. The last interview was not especially interesting, and Elias' attention was diverted. His eyes fell on a newspaper. He picked it up carelessly. He saw his own name in big type. It was the issue of the night before. He read the article through and returned the paper to its place on the under part of the table without being observed by David, whose back was turned to him.

"Wal, Dave," he said when the last of the line had left the room, "I used ter think I'd ruther do anythin' them be a skule teacher, but I swan of you don't hev it wuss yet!"

David made no response. The excitement of his boyish pleasure in showing

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Uncle Elias about had died away as he listened to the troubles and wants of his callers, and now the recollection of the old man's errand again confronted him.

Elias looked at him keenly.

"Dave," he said slowly, "aint no snap you hev got! I never know'd till today just what it meant to you. I'm proud of you, Dave! I wish—I wish you hed been my son!"

The governor crossed the room impetuously.

"Uncle Elias," he said earnestly, "I would have been if—she had lived."

"I know it, Dave, but wishes can't bring her back, and you hed order first another, now."

The governor's face lighted.

"I have, Uncle Elias, and I want you to meet her. She knows about you and Alice."

"Wal, wal, I wanter know!" said Uncle Elias. "I'd like to see her sartain. And, Dave," with a little, sheepish grin, "I've been and dun it myself."

"What, Uncle Elias? Not married?"

"That's jest what I be! Last week—to a smart, spry, good-lookin' widder, and she's made the old place quite chipper."

"I am glad—very glad," said the governor joyfully.

"Yes, Dave, that's what I cum for—to tell you, I haint much on the rite, an' I've allers wanted ter see you here in this great place. They all sez to me, 'mebby Dave's stuck on himself and his job, an' you'll hav to giv yer keerd to a nigger to be tuk in tew him,' but I sez, 'not no Dave Dunn! He ain't that kind!' an' I kin go back and tell them how you showed me all over the place and tuk me to the hotel an' ter that air stylish place what I wuz treated like a king, an' best of all that I seen yer girl!"

David grasped his hand.

"Uncle Elias!" he began, but his voice failed him.

"Say, see here, Dave, I didn't know nuttin' about that," pointing to the newspaper, "until a few minites ago. I sed to hum that I wuz a cummin', an' ef them disreputable friends of Jesse's air a gittin' up some fool paper, I don't know it. Ef they do send one in, Dave Dunn, don't ye sign it! Why, I wouldn't cry that boy out o' prison fer nuttin'! He's diff'rent from what he used ter be, Dave. He's got as low as they git, an' he is dangerous. I didn't know a safe minit for years till he wuz locked up behind them bars. Don't ye dare let him out, Dave!"

Tears of relief sprang to the strong man's eyes.

"Why, Dave," said the old man in shocked tones, "yer didn't go fer to think for a minit that I'd ask you to let him out, 'cause he wuz my son! Even if I wanted him out, an' Lord knows I don't, I'd not ask you to do somethin' wrong no more'n I'd bring dishonor to that old flag I held this morning!"

Again David grasped his hand.

"We'll go and see her, now," he said softly.

As they passed out into the corridor, a reporter hastened up to them.

"Governor, are you going to pardon Jesse Hume?"

Before the governor could reply, Elias stepped forward:

"Young feller, thar haint no pardon been asked for Jess Hume, and wat's more, thar haint a goin' to be none asked—not from me. I cum down here to pay my respects to the guvner and bring him a few apples, and you kin say so of you wanter!"

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"S IS FOR SHIFTLESS SUSANNA"

Continued from Page 5

nated the conversation as soon as was decently possible, and went kitchenward. In her anxiety not to miss her train back to the city, she refused Teresa's offer of dainty sandwiches, pastries, and tea, and merely stopped long enough to brush up her hair and to ascertain by carefully enumerating them out loud that she had her purse, her gloves, the orphanage plans, and the new time table.

"This will seem very funny," said poor Susanna, gallantly to herself, as she took her seat in the train and tried to ignore a really sharp headache, "when once I see them! If I can only get hold of Jim, and if the afternoon goes smoothly, I shan't mind anything!"

Only ten minutes late for her luncheon engagement, Susanna entered the cool depths of the restaurant and piloted by an impressed head waiter, looked confidently for her own party. It was very pleasant here, and the trays of salads and iced things that were borne continually past her were very inviting.

But still there was no Mrs. Thayer and no Jim. Susanna waited a few minutes, sat down, got up again, and finally, at 2 o'clock, went out into the blazing, unfriendly streets, and walked the five short squares that lay between the restaurant and her husband's office. A hot, dusty wind blew steadily against her; the streets were full of happy girls and

men with suitcases, bound for the country and a day or two of fresh air and idleness. Miss Perry was putting the cover on her typewriter as Susanna entered the office, her own suitcase waiting in a corner. She looked astonished as Susanna came in.

"My goodness, Mrs. Fairfax!" she ejaculated. "We've been trying to get you by telephone! Mr. Fairfax was so anxious to get hold of those orphanage plans. Mr. Thayer wanted—"

"I've been following him about all day," said Susanna, with an undignified but uncontrollable gulp. She sat down limply. "What happened to the luncheon plan?" she asked forlornly. "Where is Mr. Fairfax?"

Miss Perry, perhaps softened by the sight of Susanna's filling eyes and tired face, became very sympathetic. "Isn't it too bad—I know you have! But you see Mrs. Thayer couldn't wait for you, as she had to be back at the hospital at 2, so she would do a little shopping herself and let the rest wait."

"Well," said Susanna, after a pause in which her very soul rebelled, "if I can't be helped, I suppose! Did Mr. Fairfax go out with her?"

"He was to take her somewhere for a cup of tea, and then he was going home."

"Going home! But I've just come from there!"

"He thought he'd probably catch you

there, I think. He was anxious to get hold of those plans."

"O, I could cry—" Susanna began despairingly. But indeed Miss Perry needed no assurance of that. "I could cry!" said Susanna again. "Today," she expanded, "has been simply one miserable accident after another! I hope it'll be a lesson to me! Well—" She broke off short, for Miss Perry while kind, was human, and was visibly conscious that she had promised her brother and sister-in-law to be at their house in East Auburndale, a populous suburb, long before it was time to put the baby to bed. "I suppose there's nothing for me to do but go home," finished Susanna, disconsolately.

"Accidents will happen" trilled Miss Perry, blithely, hurrying for her car.

Susanna went thoughtfully home, reflecting soberly upon the events of the day. If she could but live this episode down, she told herself, but meet and win Mrs. Thayer somehow in the near future; but bring Jim to the point of entirely forgetting and forgiving the whole disgraceful day, she would really reform. She would "keep lists," she would "make notes," she would do all the things that those who had her good at heart had been advising for the last ten years.

Of course, if the Thayers were resentful—refused to be placated—Susanna made a little wry mouth. But they wouldn't be!

Still deep in stimulating thoughts of a complete reformation, Susanna reached home again, crossed the deep-tiled porch with its potted olives and gay awnings, entered the big hall now dim with afternoon shadows. Now for Jim—!

But where was Jim?

"Mr. Fairfax is home, Emma?"

"O, there you are, Mrs. Fairfax! And us trying, and trying to telephone you! No, ma'am, he's not home. He left on the 3:20. He'd only come out in a rush for some papers, and he had to get back to town to see some one at once. There's a note—"

Susanna sat down. Her head was splitting, she was hungry and exhausted, and, at the effort she made to keep the tears out of her eyes, a wave of pain swept across her forehead. She opened the note.

"If you can find a reliable messenger (said the note, without preamble), I wish you would get those orphanage plans to me at Thorton's office before 6. I have to meet him there at 4. The matter is really important, or I would not trouble you. I'll dine with Thayer at the club. J. F."

The pretty hallways and the glaring strip of light beyond the open door swam suddenly before Susanna's eyes. The hand that held the note trembled.

"I could not be so mean to him!" said Susanna to herself. "But perhaps he was tired and hot—poor Jim." And aloud she said with dignity: "I shall have to take this paper—these plans—in to Mr. Fairfax. Emma, I'll catch the 4:20."

"You'll be dead!" said Emma, sympathetically.

"My head aches," Mrs. Fairfax admitted briefly. But when she was upstairs and alone she found herself suddenly giving way to the long deferred burst of tears.

After a while she bathed her eyes, brushed her hair, and substituted a more substantial gown for the pongee. Then she started out once more, refreshed and more cheerful in spite of herself, and soothed unconsciously by the quiet close of the lovely autumn afternoon.

Her own gateway was separated by a flight of shallow stone steps from the road, and Susanna paused there on her way to the train. And while she was standing there she found her gaze riveted upon a motor car that, still a quarter of a mile away, was rapidly descending the slope of the hill, its two occupants fairly shaken by its violent and rapid approach. The road here was not wide, and curved on a sharp grade, and Susanna always found the descent of a large car, like this one, a matter of half-terrified fascination. But surely with this car there was more than the ordinary danger, she thought, with a sudden sick thumping at her heart. Surely here was something all wrong! Surely no sane driver—

"That man is drunk," she said, quite aloud. "He can not make it! He can't possibly—ah-h-h!"

Her voice broke on a gasp, and she pressed one hand tight over her eyes. For with swift and terrible precision the accident had indeed come to pass. The car skidded, turned, hung for a sickening second on one wheel, struck the stone of the roadside fence with a horrible grinding jar and toppled heavily over against the bank.

When Susanna uncovered her eyes again, and before she could move or cry out in the dumb horror that had taken possession of her, she saw a man in golfing wear run from the Porters' gate opposite; and another motor, in which Susanna recognized the figure of a friend and neighbor, Dr. Whitney, swept up beside the over-turned one. When she ran, as she presently found herself running, to the spot other men and women had gathered there, drawn from lawns and porches by this sudden projection of tragedy into the gayety of their Saturday afternoon.

"Hurt?" gasped Susanna, joining the group.

"The man is—dead, Billy says," said young Mrs. Porter, in lowered tones, with an agitated clutch of Susanna's arm. "And, poor thing! she doesn't realize it, and she keeps asking where her chauffeur is and why he doesn't come to her!"

"Wouldn't you think people would have better sense than to keep a man like that!" added another neighbor, Dexter Ellis, with a bitterness born entirely of nervousness. "He was drunk as a lord! Young and I were just coming out of my side gate—"

Every one talked at once—there was a confusion of excited comment. Somebody had flung a carriage robe over the silent form of the man as it lay tumbled in the dust and weeds; Susanna glanced toward it with a shudder. Somehow she found herself supporting the car's other occupant, the woman, who was half-sitting and half-lying on the bank where she had fallen. The woman had opened her eyes and was looking slowly about the group; she had pushed away the whisky the doctor held to her lips, but she looked sick and seemed in pain.

"I had just put the baby down when I heard Dex shout—" Susanna could hear Mrs. Ellis saying behind her in low tones. "O, it is an outrage—they should have regarded it years ago," said another voice. "Merest chance in the world that we took the side gate," Dr. Ellis was saying, and some man's voice Susanna did not know reiterated over and over: "Well, I guess he's run his last car, poor fellow; I guess he's run his last car—"

"You feel better, don't you?" the doctor asked his patient, encouragingly. "Just open your mouth and swallow this." And Susanna said gently: "Just try it; you'll feel so much stronger!"

The woman turned upon her a pair of eyes as heavy as a sick animal's, and moistened her lips. "Arm," she said with difficulty.

"Her arm's broken," said the doctor in a low tone, "and I think her leg too. Kano has gone to wire for the ambulance. We'll get her right into town."

"You can't take her to town!" Susanna ejaculated, turning so that she might not be heard by the sufferer. "Take her into my house."

"The hospital is really the most comfortable place for her, Mrs. Fairfax," the doctor said guardedly. "I am afraid there is internal injury. Her mind seems confused. You can't undertake the responsibility—"

"Ah, but you can't jolt the poor thing all the way into town—" Susanna began again. Mrs. Porter at her shoulder, interrupted her in an earnest whisper:

"Sue, dear, it's always done. It won't take very long and nobody expects you—"

"I know just how Susanna feels," interrupted Mrs. Ellis, "but, after all, you never can tell—we don't know one thing about her—"

"She'll be taken good care of," finished the doctor, soothingly.

"Please—don't let them frighten—my husband—" said the woman herself, slowly, her distressed eyes moving from one face to another. "If I could be moved somewhere before he hears—"

"We won't frighten him," Susanna assured her tenderly. "But will you tell us your name so we may let him know?"

The injured woman frowned. "I did tell you—you didn't I?" she asked painfully. "No"—Susanna would use this tone in her nursery some day—"No, dear, not yet."

"Tell us again," said the doctor, with too obvious an intention to soothe.

The woman gave him a look full of dignified reproach.

"If I could rest on your porch a little while," she said to Susanna, ignoring the others rather purposely, "I should be quite myself again. That will be best. Then I can think—I can't think now. These people—and my head—"

And she tried to rise supporting herself with a hand on Susanna's arm. But with the effort the last vestige of color left her face and she slipped, unconscious, back to the grass.

"Dead?" asked Susanna, very white. "No—no! Only fainted," Dr. Whitney said. "But I don't like it," he added, his finger at the limp wrist.

"Bring her in, won't you?" Susanna urged with sudden decision. "I simply

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can't let her be taken 'way up to town! This way—"

And, relieved to have it settled, she led them swiftly across the garden and into the house, flung down the snowy covers of the guest room bed, and with Emma's sympathetic help established the stranger therein.

"Trouble," whispered the injured woman apologetically, when she opened her eyes upon walls and curtains rioting with pink roses, and felt the delicious softness and freshness of the linen and pillows about her.

"O, don't think of that—I love to do it!" Susanna said honestly, patting her hand. "A nurse is coming up from the village to look out for you, and she and the doctor are going to make you more comfortable."

The woman, fixing her with a dazed yet curiously intent look, formed with her lips the words, "God bless you," and weakly shut her eyes. Susanna, slipping out of the room a few minutes later, said over and over again to herself, "I don't care—I'm glad I did it!"

Still, it was not very reassuring to hear the big hall clock strike 6, and suddenly to notice the orphanage plans lying where they had been flung on the hall table.

"I wish it was the middle of next year," said Susanna, thoughtfully, going to sink wearily into a porch chair, "or even next week! I'd pretend to be asleep when Jim came home tonight," she went on gloomily, "if it wasn't my duty to sit up and explain that there are a perfect stranger and a trained nurse in the house. Of course, being there as I was, any humane person would have to do what I did, but it does seem strange, this day of all days, that I had to be there! And I wish I had thought to send those plans by messenger—that would have been one thing the less to worry about, at least! What is it, Emma?"

For Emma, mildly repeating some question, had come out to the porch.

"Would you like tea, Mrs. Fairfax? I could bring it out to you like you had it last week with your book."

Susanna brightened. After all, she had not eaten for a long while; tea would be very welcome. And the porch was delightful, and there was the new Locke.

"Well, that was my original plan, Emma," said she, "and although the day has not gone quite as I had planned, still there's no reason why the idea should be changed. Bring a supper tea, Emma, and lots of sandwiches—I'm combining three meals in one, Miss Smith," she broke off to explain smilingly, as the nurse, trimly clad in white, came to the doorway. "I've not eaten since breakfast. You must have some tea with me. And how is she? Is her mind clearer?"

"O, dear me, yes! She's quite comfortable," Miss Smith said cheerfully. "Doctor thinks there's no question of internal trouble. Her arm is broken and her ankle badly wrenched, but that's all. And she's so grateful to you, Mrs. Fairfax. It seems she has a perfect horror of hospitals, and she feels that you've done such a remarkably kind thing—taking her in. She asked to see you and then we're going to try to make her sleep. O, and may I telephone her husband?"

"O, she could give you his name then?" cried Susanna, in relief. "O, I am glad! Indeed, you may telephone. Who is he?"

Miss Smith repeated the name and address.

Susanna stared at her blankly. Then the most radiant of all her ready smiles lighted her face.

"Well, this is really the most extraordinary day!" she said softly, after a pause. "I'll come right up, Miss Smith, but perhaps you might let me telephone for you first. I can get her husband easily. I know just where he is. He and my own husband are dining this evening, as it happens—"

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"Do you remember, señor, that once I told you some day we might test our strength and lay all the foolish rules of the game aside? That we might fight as men fight who fight for life itself? Well, what time could be better than now to amuse ourselves, señor, and to entertain these comrades of mine?" Or—his voice rose and he spat the words contemptuously at the man before him—"or would you prefer less dangerous games, such as losing a girl on the desert that you might boast to the world you are her lover?"

The restraining hand had dropped from Ted's sleeve. The faint sobbing of a violin in the patio was the only sound throughout the room. No one breathed. Ted took one step forward. With his open hand he struck the dark, scowling face with a force that shot the Mexican's mighty neck back. Then, while the sound of that blow still filled the room, Ted spoke.

"You lying bastard." The low-voiced words carried to the far-off corners of the silent room.

Jito's breath came with a gasp of uncontrollable rage. His hand slipped to the knife at his side and froze there, for now he was looking into the barrel of Don Bob's 45 automatic.

In rapid Spanish came Don Bob's words. "Let no one make a move." His eyes swept the crowd, and the swarthy hands that had sought their belts stiffened and dropped. Two steps backward brought Bob to the bar, and with a little spring he seated himself upon it. He was looking down, now, upon those upturned faces. A sea of tense, hostile faces all turned toward him—all except Ted's who still stood watching the menacing form of Jito.

"You have gone somewhat out of your way to force this fight, Jito mio," Don Bob began, and he laid the automatic beside him on the bar. "Well, there is no place better than this, no time better than now if this must come, since you, Jito, would have it so." His voice rose a little. "Meanwhile, whatever happens, let no man take any part. The first who interferes with knife or gun or fist dies quickly." He smiled in his friendly, quiet fashion down on the vaqueros. "I hope in this I have made myself quite clear, amigos."

Jito laughed. He whipped off the belt that held the long knife and threw it to Don Bob. He kicked off his spurs and hurled them with his sombrero and chaps across the room, and now he stood, his great form unencumbered, his eyes happy with the coming conflict.

"You fool," he called up to Don Bob. "You fool, to think this boy can live against me. We play no game tonight. Tonight we fight for life and not to push each other's shoulders in the dust." He raised both bearlike paws on high. "Tonight I know no rules, and with these two hands, Señor Don Bob, I tear to pieces your eastern boy who comes among us with his woman's face and with a woman's ways."

Ted had stripped off his coat. As he laid it beside Bob the older man whispered: "On your guard for every low trick in the game, and if you get him, don't let up. There's the hate of death itself in his eyes."

Ted nodded. "I know," he said, and

THE GAY BANDIT OF THE BORDER

Continued from Page 18

and made more than one reach to see if his knife was sheathed by his side. Throughout the room that suddenly deadly silence fell, so still the dripping of an overturned bottle sounded down the long length of the room, where a moment before all had been an orgy of noise. There was no mistaking the message in Jito's eyes. In Ted's wrists the blood tingled, and he smiled as he sensed at last the breaking of that long-awaited storm.

To Don Bob, too, as he stood there, flashed the thought that now before them the inevitable clash was at hand. The desert was not wide enough for those two men. Ted felt Bob's hand close quietly about his arm, and a whispered voice said, "Wait."

Step by step the great-shouldered vaquero came on. It was like the advance of a grizzly, leisurely, triumphant, gloating, and irresistible, as if he knew that time meant nothing, and that the end was sure. Almost within arm's length of Ted the Mexican stopped, so near that Radcliffe could see the bloodshot eyes, and the little beads of sweat that stood out on the dark fore-

head. Jito swept low his broad sombrero in a gesture of ironic welcome.

"You do us much honor, senores, much honor." The words came a little thickly. The voice was not quite steady, but the black eyes blazed with unmistakable hatred. "I had not thought to see you so honor a band of simple vaqueros. I thought such talents as yours, senores, were more suitable for the company of women."

The grip on Ted's arm tightened. "Not yet," the quiet voice warned.

Jito watched them. He stood, legs slightly crouching as if awaiting a blow. The unmoved silence of those two lashed him to fury. They were so utterly alone, so completely surrounded by his waiting horde, and yet they seemed so wholly unafraid. Sliding his riding boot forward on the smooth floor, Jito moved a pace nearer.

The memory of this American, and of the night that he had spent out on the desert with Adela, the memory of Adela drawing down the face of this man and kissing his lips—suddenly all this blazed like fire within Jito, so that the black eyes had become pin-points of hatred, and the slow voice had sunk to a growl.

turned toward his adversary. In the face of danger Radcliffe had become calm again. Once more he was the cool, watchful fighter, alert and unafraid.

The room was still with the silence of death, and beyond the cleared circle before the bar every man stood motionless and tense, their breathless gaze fastened on those two figures who held each other's eyes beneath the blazing lights. Their shadows lay huddled beneath them as they stood now, barely an arm's length apart, watchful and deadly. They seemed greater than human, crouching there. They seemed not human at all. More like two primeval forces, two storm gods out of some legend of past heroic days. Jito spoke in his low, growling voice.

"Cuidado, Americano. We fight now in a game where all is fair, and I think this time I tear you apart. Are you ready?"

Ted merely smiled in answer to the Mexican's question.

Quietly Jito stepped sidewise, with his great torso bent forward and the big arms swaying loosely in front of him, like the arms of a gorilla. Alert and without a sound he began that sidewise, slouching walk of his, making a kind of shuffling circle about Ted, watching him, waiting his chance. A quarter of a circle he had made, while Ted never moved, except to turn a little. Unheeded, the cigaret in Don Bob's mouth had gone out. Not a vaquero breathed. The very soul of every man was out there in that silent circle of waiting death.

Then, without warning, Ted leaped. There was a quick rush of breath from the spectators. None expected it. All had thought the first move would come from Jito. With the leap of a panther, the man's heavy body hurtled itself through the air, his arms shot forward, and like pistol shots his fists rang out against Jito's jaw. The Mexican stumbled back, and now the lights gleamed on a long, cruel gash below his mouth. Ted darted back, but like lightning Jito's right hand had closed over his wrist, and with a lung and a growl the Mexican closed. His free arm wrapped about Ted's neck, and the short, powerful fingers gripped Ted's throat. They tightened, and the corded veins of the vaquero's arm told of the punishing vice that had begun cutting the life from his adversary.

"Dios," whispered a vaquero. "He will tear the Americano's throat out." They were too close now for blows. In the bearlike hug of the Mexican, Ted's chest pressed against Jito's shoulder. The tearing pain at his throat blinded him, blood was pounding in his head for want of air, and always those gripping fingers tightened. The lights seemed to flicker and grow dull. His agonized lungs were bursting. Desperately Ted reached down and twisted his own arm low about the vaquero's waist, then heaved with all his might. Slowly the Mexican's weight left the ground, and Ted swung the great body outward, then lunged forward.

With a crash they struck the floor, Jito beneath. As the vaquero's head hit the boards, Ted felt that killing grip loosen. With all his might he pulled back and away and struggled to his knees. His head throbbed dully, his breath came in painful gasps, but almost

in the same moment that implacable foe was again upon him.

Out of the shadow beyond the circle of light, Ted saw Jito rise and again hurl himself forward. Like lightning Ted jumped aside, and the Mexican's hand caught only his shirt, ripping it from his body. He turned as if in the air, and in another second they were linked together again, clawing, snarling like maddened beasts, striking out where there was room to strike, locked in entwining arms that ever and again rose and fell with bruising thuds or with the rip of torn flesh. Sweat dripped from their bodies, their clothes hung in rags about their waists, their breathing had become a gasping, sobbing thing. But ever they fought on.

Once they fell and rolled, shaking the room with the impact. Once Jito, pulling himself free, climbed astride the other and raised his hand for one annihilating stroke, only to fall back before the whip-like lashes of Ted's fists.

Men ached from the strained positions they had taken, yet they could not move. Hours seemed to pass while these two crushed and tore each other's bodies. Jito's lip hung open and bleeding, and his cheeks were puffed so that the black eyes seemed to blaze out of two deep caverns. That long scar above his eyes glowed an angry red. Ted's throat was matted with blood, and his head torn by the Mexican's claws.

They stood now, toe to toe, driving pistol-like blows into each other's bodies, then again Jito lunged forward and closed. This time he flung both arms about Ted and hurled him across the room. Ted struck a table, crashed through it, and fell face downward against the wall. In a second Jito was on him, eager this time to end it all, but as the Mexican's hand slipped over the American's shoulder, Ted reached up and seized his wrist in the viselike grasp of his own two hands. Aided by the impetus of the Mexican's rush he swung

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Jito about, then thrust upward, and now the vaquero's band was being forced up between his shoulder-blades in the dreaded hammerlock. Still keeping his hold with one hand, Ted wrapped his right arm about the Mexican's neck, then pushed with all his might. Slowly Jito's arm rose. Frantically he whipped about him to seize some vulnerable part of the boy, but his clawing hand found no hold. Second by second his arm was being thrust upward until the great muscles cracked and Jito's mouth opened in a groan of pain and rage.

They were motionless now, those two grotesque, hulking bodies, beneath the glare of the lights. Their clothing hung in tattered shreds. Their breathing came in agonized sobs, and already one of Jito's eyes had closed. Ted's own face was haggard, his jaw had dropped, and the blue veins on his forehead stood out like cords beneath his wet hair. Yet in this last supreme effort his aching muscles knotted as he forced Jito's captive hand still higher, still nearer the breaking point. Once more a low groan was wrung from the Mexican's lips as Ted forced his arm upward inch by inch in that killing hold. Jito's shoulder was on fire. Flinging his head back, he tried to batter the man's face with his great skull, and once his head crashed on the point of Ted's chin with a sharp crack. For an instant the American's hold weakened, then, with a last effort, strengthened, and again the merciless hammerlock tightened. Already the Mexican's great sinews were cracking with the agony and strain of it. His neck had swollen. The great head lolled from side to side in a very ecstasy of pain, but still the dark giant fought on. One gripping hand had caught Ted by the shoulder, and in a last frantic effort tore the skin with clenched nails. No sound. It might have been a place of death except for the sobbing breath of those two forms, horrible now to look at, savage, beyond all thought and all sensation except for the blood lust that rioted in both their brains. They were no longer men. They were two primeval forces of the world, symbols of clashing destinies. They were hate incarnate.

And still, head down, eyes closed, sweat pouring over bloody skin, they struggled on.

"Mother of God," one murmured hoarsely from the crowd, "never before have men fought as these men fight. They are wolves, these two, mad wolves. Look in God's name! Now the Americans strangles him!"

For, still holding Jito's wrist in his left hand, Ted had wound his right arm closer about the Mexican's neck and little by little was tightening his hold. Jito's eyes bulged. Once a stifled gurgle rose from his torn lips. Shifting his weight to his left foot he whipped suddenly about with all the force of his right leg, in a frantic attempt to maim Ted, but he was too close. Like a dying man his free arm rose high in the air, his fingers opened and clutched horribly. The man's life was being forced from his body by this merciless antagonist.

Once among those silent spectators a form moved. One of Jito's vaqueros whipped a knife from his belt and stepped forward, but the click of a cocked automatic sounded unmistakably

loud in the silent room. He looked up to see the gray eyes of Don Bob watching warily. Bob said no word, but the heavy Colt had shifted ever so little toward the Mexican who held the knife. Quickly the man dropped back into the crowd again.

Then, suddenly, it was ended.

Once again the great fist of Jito raised impotently into the air, but the jerking, mighty fingers clutched nothingness, and now his knees bent and his head fell limply forward. It was over. The giant of the border was down. One last moan of agony rose from those tortured lips, and his eyes closed. As he slid to the floor, Ted threw his arms about him, raised him and carried that great, unconscious form across the room. On the bar he laid his fallen adversary and stood for a long moment watching him while his own heart pounded wildly in his breast. For a moment the room swayed. His chest rose and fell, gasping for air. Then he raised his head toward Bob and tried to smile.

The older man had turned toward the watchful little knot of vaqueros. "This man," Bob said to them in Spanish, "gives you back your chief. If he had chosen he might have killed him. We go now, but let none of you move until we are away."

Once more Ted looked at the crumpled hulk lying so strangely quiet across the bar. All hatred, all bitterness had gone out of him—he felt only a great weariness, a desire for sleep. Don Bob threw his coat over Radcliffe's shoulders and led him out into the night.

CHAPTER XXVII

NEXT morning Ann Reed sat in her room smoking a late after-breakfast cigarette. Downstairs Mendoza's was still afire with the tale of last night's encounter. Through the desert ranches and toward the foothills men were spreading the tale as they rode out in the early dawn. Twice already Mendoza had thrust his dark face into the singer's room to repeat to her some word of that night's memorable battle, but now, as she looked up from beside the sunny window, Mendoza had different news.

"A señorita asks to come up." There was a quaver of excitement in his voice.

"It is the Señorita Morales." For a moment the little man was silent. "It must

be about that fight of those two mad

giants. Que va? All the border will

know of this by night. And then what

will those swaggering vaqueros of Paco

Morales say?"

The long lashes of the girl lifted. She

smiled and dropped the cigarette into a

bowl before her. "Ask Señorita Morales

to come up."

And she was still smiling when the

door opened and Adela Morales stood in the doorway.

Their eyes held each other with a long,

questioning look. To the older woman

Adela seemed enviably young and splen-

didly alive as she stood there hesitant in

the doorway. A shaft of light from the

window touched the coppery hair curling

beneath the broad-brimmed Panama.

The flush of desert winds was in her

cheeks. She entered and softly closed

the door.

"You know who I am," she said.

Ann Reed nodded. "And I know, too, why you came. Please sit down," she said, indicating a chair.

As Adela pulled off her driving gloves the singer saw her lips quiver, and knew that tears were not far from her eyes. A sudden wave of sympathy for the girl caught her. She broke the silence. "You were taken in last night by what you saw here, weren't you? Just for a moment?"

Adela nodded, her eyes still bright with tears.

"Your uncle is stupid. But all men are stupid, so why complain?" The singer lighted a cigarette. "And yet that was a dangerously cruel thing to do. You know, I had to hold back that big giant of yours, or he might have made Paco Morales very sorry for himself. But you don't need me to tell you who this gringo giant of yours really loves, do you? Of course you don't. You only came to me to make sure. It was a courageous thing. I wonder if any man is worth it?"

Then slowly, dispassionately, but with relentless accuracy, Ann Reed told of Morales' earlier visit and of the offer he had made.

"How he knew that Radcliffe was in my room last night, I can't say," she finished.

"But why was he here?"

Ann smiled understandingly. "He came up to get a note for Don Bob. That's all."

The frank friendship in her eyes won Adela. "Until I was in bed and began thinking, I think I hated you both, and I had no right to hate, for—I have no claim on him."

"I know. I know terribly well of love that has no claim. But after you thought about it you realized."

"I only knew that there was some mistake—that there had to be a mistake, and I had to come to you first. It taught me—how much I cared."

Again the singer smiled. "That was worth something, wasn't it? If you had been less straightforward, Morales might have done the harm he'd hoped to do. You know, the greatest favor I could do you would be to tell you not to trust your uncle. If you love this American boy—and I think you do—watch Paco Morales. I don't believe he would stop at anything to keep you two apart."

Ann rose, and, walking to where the girl sat, laid a white hand on her shoulder. "You're young, and you have courage, my dear, and many people will love you. The world for you should be a glorious place to live in. Don't ever spoil it. Don't let doubts and suspicions come between you and that big gringo of yours. And if you both love, then give yourselves utterly to love. Don't let uncles or differences of race or anything in this world keep you apart. That's all the wisdom I can give you." The calm eyes that were neither sad nor gay looked down almost wistfully at the face where the miracle and radiance of love had come.

She might have sighed. "You were made for happiness. Go and claim it. Danger lies ahead for both of you. Your lover has two of the most powerful enemies in the border. Watch them both. And trust."

Impulsively Adela kissed her. "You've

helped me more than you know," she whispered, and ran down the hall.

For a long time the singer sat watching the thin ribbon of smoke as it spiraled upward from a broken cigarette. Then, very quietly, she laid her head among the pillows and covered her face.

Straight from Mendoza's Adela drove to the house of Don Bob, and as the rancher ran down the steps she laid both hands on his arm.

"You heard what my uncle did?" He nodded.

"It was unworthy of a caballero. I am ashamed for him and for me. But what shall I say to Ted?"

He patted her hand. "Better say nothing at all, dear. It's over, and besides Ted had quite a busy evening after that."

"How is he? And where is he?"

Bob nodded toward the house. "Inside, trying to shave with his left hand. He's just a little awkward this morning, for some reason." Then his eyes were fired with the memory of that struggle, and he shook the girl gently by the shoulders. "Our Ted made immortal border history last night, Adela. Jito's defeat will mean more for the peon than a dozen of El Coyote's raids. But when did you hear of it?"

"By dawn this morning the vaqueros brought the news to the ranch, and an hour later Jito rode in. He was terribly battered. Uncle and I put him to bed, and later he and Jito had a long talk together, but they told me nothing."

A door closed above them, and they looked up to see Ted. His right hand was bandaged and above his forehead stretched an angry bruise. As he saw Adela his face lightened. Running quickly down the steps he took her hand and raised it to his lips.

"I've been so worried since I heard," she said simply, and even now there was a little tremor in her voice. "You're not hurt?"

Ted shook his head. He tried to speak casually. "I'm as sore as the very devil, but not hurt. Your little cousin has left his mark on every square inch of me, but in six months of a year I'll be as fit as ever."

THE FOUR JUST MEN

Continued from Page 3

"This morning, before you left, you gave him a bundle of newspapers, did you not?"

Manfred nodded.

"They were English newspapers," he said. "Thery does not know a word of English. There were pictures in them—I gave them to amuse him."

"You gave him, amongst others, the 'Megaphone'?"

"Yes—hai!" Manfred remembered.

"The offer of a reward was in it—and the free pardon—printed in Spanish."

Manfred was gazing into vacancy the while.

"I remember," he said, slowly; "I read it afterwards."

"It was very ingenious," remarked Poicart, commendingly.

"I noticed he was rather excited, but I accounted for this by the fact that we had told him last night of the method we intended adopting for the removal of Ramon and the part he was to play."

Together they sought the shadow of the porch, and as Don Bob lighted the girl's cigarette she looked swiftly up at Ted. "I'm not going to talk about last night—not ever. It was a cruel stupid act of my uncle's—I shan't forgive him for that. You see, my friend, I have never known any American well—and so my uncle is bitterly afraid I may fall in love with you." She smiled. "Is it not a compliment, big American?" Then, suddenly serious again, she added: "But all this means you are in danger—very real danger. Jito will not let many days pass before he wipes out the memory of last night. And it may be my uncle will help him. You must not come into Mexico again, Ted. Even here you are not safe."

"Safe from what?"

"From Jito, and from something—I don't know what. There's a shadow I can't explain but that frightens me. Don't you feel it, Bob?"

Bob smiled slowly. He looked out over the desert. "Danger here as everywhere. Always the bright face of danger. 'What can Ted do about it?'"

"He can keep out of Mexico."

"Would you really want him to?"

Ted himself answered. "That's just what I can't do. Adela, I'm running Bob's cattle over in Mexico, and I'll be riding into the Mexican ranges as a regular part of the work. It will be better if I just ignore last night and let Jito do what he wants. In any event, I'd hate to have him think that I'm hiding. Personally, I believe Jito and I can afford to call it quits."

He looked down unsmilingly at his bandaged hand.

Bob nodded to Adela. "This belligerent foreman of mine isn't going to be worth a centavo as a cowpuncher today. If you're driving to town you might take him from under my feet."

"Sold!" Eagerly Ted reached for his hat. "It's the first holiday I've ever been offered. Let's go before this old slave driver repeats."

And together they ran down the steps to the girl's car.

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

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Leon changed the topic to allow the waiter to serve the refreshments that had been ordered.

"It is preposterous," he went on, without changing his key, "that a horse on which so much money has been placed should not have been sent to England at least a month in advance."

"The idea of a bad channel-crossing leading to the scratching of the name of a big race is unheard of," added Manfred, severely.

The waiter left them.

"We went for a walk this afternoon," resumed Leon, "and we were passing along Regent Street, he stopping every few seconds to look in the shops, when suddenly—we had been staring at the window of a photographer's—I missed him. There were hundreds of people in the street—but no Thery. . . . I have been seeking him ever since. Been looking everywhere."

Leon sipped his drink and looked at his watch. The other two men did nothing.

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ing, said nothing. A careful observer might have noticed that both Manfred's and Poiccart's hands strayed to the top button of their coats.

"Perhaps not so bad as that," smiled Gonsalez.

Manfred broke the silence of the two. "I take all blame," he commenced, but Poiccart stopped him with a gesture.

"If there is any blame, I alone am blameless," he said with a short laugh. "No, George, it is too late to talk of blame. We underrated the cunning of m'sieur, the enterprise of the English newspapers and—and—"

"The girl at Jerez," concluded Leon.

Five minutes passed in silence, each man thinking rapidly.

It was Manfred who spoke, and he rose, followed by Poiccart and Gonsalez.

"If Thery has not gone to the police—where would he go?"

The tone of Leon's question suggested the answer.

"To the office of the newspaper that published the Spanish advertisement," was Manfred's reply, and instinctively the three men knew that this was the correct solution.

"Your motor car will be useful," said Manfred, and all three left the bar.

IN THE editor's room Thery faced the two journalists.

"Thery?" repeated Welby. "I do not know that name. Where do you come from? What is your address?"

"I come from Jerez in Andalusia, from the wine farm of Sienor."

"Not that," interrupted Welby; "where do you come from now—what part of London?"

Thery raised his hands despairingly.

"How should I know? There are houses and streets and people—and it is in London, and I was to kill a man, a minister, because he had made a wicked law—they did not tell me—"

"They—who?" asked the editor eagerly.

"The other three."

"But their names?"

Thery shot a suspicious glance at his questioner.

"There is a reward," he said sullenly, "and a pardon. I want these before I tell—"

The editor stepped to his desk.

"If you are one of the four you shall have your reward—you shall have some of it now."

"Hasten! You will receive your reward and the pardon also. Tell us, who are the Four Just Men; who are the other three; where are they to be found?"

"Here," said a clear voice behind him; and he turned as a stranger, closing the door as he entered, stood facing the three men—a stranger in evening dress, masked from brow to chin.

There was a revolver in the hand that hung at his side.

"I am one," repeated the stranger calmly; "there are two others waiting outside the building."

"How did you get here—what do you want?" demanded the editor, and stretched his hand to an open drawer in his desk.

"Take your hand away"—and the thin barrel of the revolver rose with a jerk. "How I came here your doorkeeper will explain, when he recovers consciousness.

Why I am here is because I wish to save my life—not an unreasonable wish. If Thery speaks I may be a dead man—I am about to prevent his speaking. I have no quarrel with either of you gentlemen, but if you hinder me I shall kill you," he said, simply.

"You," said the masked man, turning to the terror-stricken informer and speaking in Spanish, "would have betrayed your comrades—you would have thwarted a great purpose, therefore it is just that you should die."

He raised the revolver to the level of Thery's breast, and Thery fell on his knees, mouthing a prayer.

"By God—no!" cried the editor, and sprang forward.

The revolver turned on him.

"Sir," said the unknown—and his voice sunk almost to a whisper—"do not force me to kill you."

"You shall not commit a cold-blooded murder," cried the editor in a white heat of anger, and moved forward, but Welby held him back.

"What is the use?" said Welby, in an undertone. "He means it—we can do nothing."

"You can do something," said the stranger, and his revolver dropped to his side.

Before the editor could answer there was a knock at the door.

"Say you are busy," and the revolver covered Thery, who was a whimpering, huddled heap by the wall.

"Go away," shouted the editor, "I am busy."

"The printers are waiting," said the voice of the messenger.

"Now," said the chief, as the footsteps of the boy died away, "what can we do?"

"You can save this man's life."

"How?"

"Give me your word of honor that you will allow us both to depart, and will neither raise an alarm nor leave this room for a quarter of an hour after we are gone."

The editor hesitated.

"How do I know that the murder you contemplate will not be committed as soon as you get clear?"

The other laughed under his mask.

"How do I know that as soon as I have left the room you will not raise an alarm?"

"I should have given my word, sir," said the editor, stiffly.

"And I mine," was the quiet response, "and my word has never been broken."

In the editor's mind a struggle was going on; here in his hand was the greatest story of the century; another minute and he would have extracted from Thery the secret of the four.

Even now a bold dash might save everything—and the printers were waiting . . . but the hand that held the revolver was the hand of a resolute man, and the chief yielded.

"I agree, but under protest," he said, "I warn you that your arrest and punishment is inevitable."

"I regret," said the masked man with a slight bow, "that I can not agree with you—nothing is inevitable save death. Come, Thery," he said, speaking in Spanish. "On my word I will not harm you."

Thery hesitated, then slunk forward with his head bowed and his eyes fixed on the door.

The masked man opened the door an inch, listened, and in the moment came the inspiration of the editor's life.

"Look here," he said quickly, the man giving place to the journalist, "when you get home will you write us an article about yourselves? You needn't give us any embarrassing particulars, you know—something about your aspirations, your reasons."

"Sir," said the masked man—and there was a note of admiration in his voice—"I recognize in you an artist. The article will be delivered tomorrow," and opening the door the two men stepped into the darkened corridor.

CHAPTER VII

BLOOD-RED placards, hoarse newsboys, overwhelming headlines, and column after column of leaded type told the world next day, how near the four had been to capture. Men in the train leaned forward, their newspapers on their knees, and explained what they would have done had they been in the editor of the "Megaphone's" position. People stopped talking about wars and famines and droughts and street accidents and parliaments and ordinary every day murders in order to concentrate their minds upon the topic of the hour.

Would the Four Just Men carry out their promise and slay the secretary for foreign affairs on the morrow? Nothing else was spoken about. Here was a murderer threatened a month ago, and, unless something unforeseen happened, to be committed tomorrow. No wonder that the London press devoted the greater part of its space to the discussion of Thery and his recapture.

At noon-day Scotland Yard circulated broadcast a hastily printed sheet:

55,000 REWARD

Wanted, on suspicion of being connected with a criminal organization known as the Four Just Men, Miguel Thery, alias Salmont, alias Le Chico, late of Jerez, Spain, a Spaniard speaking no English. Height 5 feet, 8 inches. Eyes brown, hair black, slight black moustache, face broad. Scar: White scar on cheek, old knife wound on body. Figure, thick-set.

The above reward will be paid to any person or persons who shall give such information as shall lead to the identification of the said Thery with the hand known as the Four Just Men, and his apprehension.

From which may be gathered that, acting on the information furnished by the editor and his assistant at 2 o'clock in the morning, the direct Spanish cable had been kept busy; important personages had been roused from their beds in Madrid, and the history of Thery as recorded in the bureau had been reconstructed from pigeon-hole records for the enlightenment of an energetic commissioner of police.

Sir Philip Ramon, sitting writing in his study at Portland Place, found a difficulty in keeping his mind upon the letter that lay before him. It was a letter addressed to his agent at Branford, the huge estate over which he, in the years when he was out of office, played squire. Neither wife nor chick nor child had Sir Philip. ". . . if by any chance these men succeed in carrying out their purpose I have made ample provision not only for myself but for all who have rendered me

After a while Thery had finished. "All is now ready," he said, with a grin of satisfaction; "let me find your minister of state, give me a minute's speech with him, and the next minute he dies." His face, repulsive in repose, was now demoniacal. He was like some great bull from his own country made more terrible with the snuffle of blood in his nostrils.

In strange contrast were the faces of his employers. Not a muscle of either face stirred. There was neither exultation nor remorse in their expressions—only a curious something that creeps into the set face of the Judge as he pronounces the dread sentence of the law. Thery saw that something, and it froze him to his very marrow.

He threw out his hands as if to ward them off.

"Stop! stop!" he shouted; "don't look like that, in the name of God—don't don't!" He covered his face with shaking hands.

"Like what, Thery?" asked Leon.

Thery shook his head.

"I can not say—like the judge at Granada when he says—when he says, 'Let the thing be done!'"

"If we look so," said Manfred harshly, "it is because we are judges—and not alone judges but executioners of our judgment."

"I thought you would have been pleased," whimpered Thery.

"You have done well," said Manfred, gravely.

"Bueno, bueno!" echoed the others. "Pray God that we are successful," added Manfred solemnly, and Thery stared at this strange man in blank amazement.

SUPERINTENDENT FALMOUTH reported to the commissioner that afternoon that all arrangements were now complete for the protection of the threatened minister.

"I've filled up 44 Downing Street," he said; "there's a man in every room. I've got four of our best men on the roof, men in the basement, men in the kitchens."

"What about the servants?" asked the commissioner.

"Sir Philip has brought up his own people from the country, and now there isn't a person in the house from the private secretary to the doorkeeper whose name and history I do not know from A to Z."

The commissioner breathed an anxious sigh.

"I shall be very glad when tomorrow is over," he said. "What are the final arrangements?"

"There has been no change, sir, since we fixed things up the morning Sir Philip came over. He remains at 44 all day tomorrow until half-past eight, goes over to the house at nine to move the reading of the bill, returns at eleven."

"I have given orders for the traffic to be diverted along the embankment between a quarter to nine and a quarter after, and the same at eleven," said the commissioner. "Four closed carriages will drive from Downing Street to the house; Sir Philip will drive down in a motorcar immediately afterwards."

There was a rap at the door—the con-

versation took place in the commissioner's office—and a police officer entered. He bore a card in his hand, which he laid upon the table.

"Senior Jose di Silva," read the commissioner, "the Spanish chief of police." He explained to the superintendent. "Show him in, please."

Senor di Silva, a lithe little man, with a pronounced nose and a beard, greeted the Englishmen with the exaggerated politeness that is peculiar to Spanish official circles.

"I am sorry to bring you over," said Mr. Commissioner, after he had shaken hands with the visitor and had introduced him to Falmouth; "we thought you might be able to help us in our search for Thery."

"Luckily I was in Paris," said the Spaniard; "yes, I know Thery, and I am astounded to find him in such distinguished company. Do I know the four?"—his shoulders went up to his ears—"who does? I know of them—there was a case at Malaga, you know?"

Thery is not a good criminal. I was astonished to learn that he had joined the band."

"By the way," said the chief, picking up a copy of the police notice that lay on his desk, and running his eye over it, "your people omitted to say—although it really isn't of very great importance—what is Thery's trade?"

The Spanish policeman knitted his brow.

"Thery's trade! Let me remember." he thought for a moment. "Thery's trade? I don't think I know; yet I have an idea that it is something to do with rubber. His first crime was stealing rubber; but if you want to know for certain—"

The commissioner laughed.

"It really isn't at all important," he said lightly.

But it was, as they were to learn to their sorrow within 24 hours.

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK
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Sir Philip has been given just one more day to live. He is also to be given a final warning before the death hour. Does he get this warning? Are the four really in earnest? Don't miss the next instalment of this serial.

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This is a new style, true American type home that is meeting with great popularity. We are desirous of obtaining a suitable name for it for use in connection with a building program. We will pay you \$100.00 A YEAR FOR LIFE if you suggest the most suitable name. There are no strings tied to this offer. Sending us a name for this house does not obligate you in any way. Nothing to buy or sell. We merely want a suitable name and are willing to pay \$100.00 A YEAR FOR LIFE for the best name sent us. Think of it, \$100.00 this year and each and every year for the balance of your natural life. A steady, guaranteed

cash income. Surely, you can think of an appropriate name for such a beautiful house. Do not use more than two words. Any word or words may be used or any combination of words such as "Parklawn", "Cozynook", "Hearthome" or names like "Sunshin Inn", "Rest Haven", etc. No matter how simple your suggestion is send it in at once. Any name may win. Possibly the most suitable name has already flashed into your mind. If it has—send it in at once and \$100.00 cash this year and each and every year for the rest of your life is yours FREE.

NOTHING ELSE REQUIRED—RUSH NAME TODAY

Positively nothing else is required of you to win \$100.00 cash now and \$100.00 cash each and every year for life—just suggest the most suitable name—that's all. This offer is open to every one excepting members of this firm, its employees and relatives. Each participant may send only one name. Sending two or more names will cause all names submitted by that person to be thrown

out. Contest closes April 30th, 1932. Should two or more persons submit equally suitable names for this house the full amount of the prize offered will be paid to each one so tying. And the \$100.00 cash for promptness also will be paid to each winner providing suggestion is mailed within three (3) days after this announcement is read.

CALIFORNIA LADY GETS \$100 A YEAR FOR LIFE



We just recently paid Mrs. Allie Francis, Route 6, Box 439, Bakersfield, California, \$100.00 and put her on our books to receive \$100.00 EACH AND EVERY YEAR FOR THE REST OF HER LIFE for sending us the most suitable name for a house. You may be the next. You risk nothing. It costs you nothing. Just think how nice it would be to receive \$100.00 each year for the rest of your life. Maybe you have the most suitable name right on the tip of your tongue this minute. Don't delay sending it in.

\$100 EXTRA FOR PROMPTNESS

We want a suitable name for this house real quickly and will provide the winner an extra \$100.00 just for PROMPTNESS providing suggestion is sent within three (3) days after this announcement is read. Rush your suggestion TODAY—QUICK. The very name you have in mind may bring you a permanent cash income of \$100.00 A YEAR FOR LIFE and \$100.00 extra besides for PROMPTNESS in sending it in.

ANY NAME MAY WIN
Rush your suggestion TODAY regardless of what it is. Any easy, simple name may win. \$100.00 each and every year for life and \$100.00 cash for PROMPTNESS may be yours if you hurry. A postal card will do. Just say, "I suggest _____ as a name for your beautiful house."

C. C. LEE, MGR.

BOX 2142, BATAVIA, ILLINOIS



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